Conference background
The conference is the outcome of a Romanian national research grant investigating the issue of Romanian foreign policy in the context of its realist and Utopian traits. The research project started from the premises that the previous literature emphasized from an objectivist perceptive the role of the external environment in shaping the Romanian foreign policy. This project argues that not only the external factors determined in Romania’s foreign policy idealist or realist approach, but rather the way in which decision makers perceived and internalized the external environment. While it is a truism that people act on the basis of their perceptions or views of reality, the subject has received no systemic analysis with respect to the foreign policy of Romania.

Until the decision-making approach has been introduced into the IR discipline in the mid-1950s, researchers refrained from approaching foreign policy in terms of perceptions. In 1959, Kenneth E. Boulding argued that decision-makers do not respond, when decide on a matter, to the ‘objective’ facts of the situation, but to their image of the situation. 'It is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, what determines our behaviour', Boulding contended (Kenneth E. Boulding, 'National images and international systems', in Journal of Conflict Resolutions, 3-2/1959, 120). In 1961, Harold and Margaret Sprout made a valuable contribution to the perceptual study of foreign policy distinguishing between the psychological environment and the operational environment (Harold Sprout, Margaret Sprout, ‘Environmental factors in the study in the study of international politics’, in J.N. Rosenau (ed.), International politics and foreign policy: a reader in research and theory, New York: The Free Press, 1961). During the 1970s and the 1980s, Ole Holsti, Robert Jervis, Stephen Walker, Deborah Welsh Larson or Erik Beukel made notable contributions to these studies. During the last two decades, momentous developments in perceptual approaches of the international relations and foreign policy occurred with the works of William C. Wohlfforth, Thomas J. Christensen or K.P. O’Reilly.

Usually, the scientific literature treats the actors’ perceptions as one variable amongst other variables and argues that the key question is how perceptions could be linked to the political decision. The research method usually used to assess the linkage between actors’ perceptions of the world on one hand and the adoption of a certain foreign policy decision on the other is process tracing. However, according to Henrik Larsen’s thesis, the actors’ beliefs should be treated not as one variable among others, but rather as ‘necessary meaningful references for the actors, the means by which they make sense of the world’.

This research identifies the realist and idealist approaches in Romania’s foreign policy, from two directions, doctrine and practice, but in the same time it addresses the question of the reasons that determined their alternation. Thus, the past changes in Romania’s foreign policy have a broad relevance for both practical political implication and for purposes of academic illumination, but, in spite of this relevance, the subject has received relatively little systemic analysis by now. Answering the question as to why, how and when the Romanian decision makers replaced idealist approaches with realist approaches and vice versa in Romania’s foreign policy, or why the change occurred could offer guidelines for Romania’s current foreign policy. Within the process of structuring or restructuring Romania’s foreign policy and foreign relations, it seems reasonable to return for guidelines to previous cases of transformations or evolution.

Conference Aims and Themes
The conference starts from the premises that during this period, Romania’s foreign policy has passed through pronounced stages of „idealism” and pronounced stages of „realism” and seeks expertise from IR historians, theorists and analysts in order to tackle these phases, the confluences between Idealist and Realist traits, the points of departure from realism to idealism and from idealism to realism.
All participants whose papers are accepted for presentation will be offered free conference attendance.
Each presentation at the conference will be allotted 20 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion. The symposium language is English.
Selected papers presented at the conference will be published in a thematic volume to be published with Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Thursday, 21 May 2015**

**11.00-12.00: Registration of the participants;**

The Institute of Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technological Research /
Institutul de Cercetare Științifică și Tehnologică Multidisciplinară
The International Centre for Conferences, Entrance hall, Info Desk, Valahia University,
Aleea Sinaia, No. 13

**12.00-12.15:** The opening of the conference;

The Amphitheatre of The Institute of Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technological Research,
Aleea Sinaia, No. 13

Prof. Dr. Silviu Miloiu, Valahia University of Târgoviște

**12.15-13.00: Plenary session**

The Amphitheatre of The Institute of Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technological Research,
Aleea Sinaia, No. 13

**Chair:** Prof. Dr. Silviu Miloiu, Valahia University of Târgoviște

**Speaker:** Kari Alenius, University of Oulu

Keynote address I: *From wary realism to daring utopism. Romania’s foreign policy viewed by the Finnish Embassy in Bucharest, 1939-1975*

**13.00-15.30:** Session 1

Grigore Gafencu Research Center, The Institute of
Chair: Magdalena Ionescu

Silviu Miloiu, *Realism versus international liberalism in Romanian foreign policy: the outlook of Romanian envoys of the 1930s*

Florina Sorescu, *The analyses of the Romanian envoys accredited to Fascist Italy: The case of Lugoșianu*

Alexandra Toader, *The Propagandistic Discourse on International Image of the Leader. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej’s Attendance at the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly (September 1960)*

Elena Dragomir, *The RWP’s 1964 ‘Declaration of Independence’ and the Valev Plan*

Cezar Stanciu, *Romania and the emergence of Ostpolitik*

**Friday, 22 May 2015**

**08.00-09.30**: Session 2

Ovidius University of Constanța, Room E 114, Campus, Building A

Chair: Silviu Miloiu

Emanuel Plopeanu, *United States perceptions about foreign policy options of Romania in the summer of 1940*

Adrian Vițalaru, *Diplomacy and War. A Few Remarks on the Diplomatic Missions of Romania during WWII*

Costel Coroban, *Marshal Ion Antonescu, A Realist Dictator?*
Organizing Committee:
Chair of the Organizing Committee:
Prof. Dr. Silviu Miloiu, Director of „Grigore Gafencu” Research Center for the History of International Relations and Cultural Studies;

Members of the Organizing Committee:
Dr. Elena Dragomir, University of Helsinki
Dr. Cezar Stanciu, Valahia University of Târgoviște

Secretary of the Organizing Committee:
Dr. Magdalena Ionescu, Valahia University of Târgoviște

Contact information
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