

ADRIAN VIȚALARU\*

**FROM ALEXANDRU G. FLORESCU TO GHEORGHE GRIGORCEA.  
THE CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION OF ROMANIA IN POLAND  
(1919–1939)**

**Introduction**

Notwithstanding the publication, in Romania, of thorough studies on the diplomatic, cultural or economic relations between the Romanian and the Polish states in the inter-war period, there is still room for nuancing or deepening certain aspects from the vast topic of Romanian-Polish contacts. Such an aspect is the analysis of the ‘profile’ of diplomats accredited at the diplomatic mission in Poland<sup>1</sup>. I will consequently focus, in the present study, on the analysis of chiefs of diplomatic mission of Romania in Poland, looking to answer several questions: who were the diplomats sent to represent the Romanian state in Warsaw? Did they have any personal or professional connections with Poland or Northern Europe? Was Poland a professional attraction in the career of Romanian diplomats? Can we assign a certain intellectual and professional profile to the chiefs of diplomatic mission in Poland?

I chose this topic because I was intrigued by an observation made in an analysis of chiefs of diplomatic missions of Romania. I noticed at a first glance that most chiefs of mission from the Romanian network were accredited in Warsaw. While Romania was represented in Poland, in the interwar period, by ten chiefs of diplomatic mission (eight ministers plenipotentiary and two ambassadors), Poland was represented in Romania by five chiefs of diplomatic mission, among whom two diplomats and important politicians: Aleksander Skrzyński (1919–1923) – minister of Foreign Affairs and prime-minister (1925–1926) – and Jan Szembek (1927–1932), future adjunct to the minister of Foreign Affairs, J. Beck<sup>2</sup>.

Considering the above, how can the instability of the diplomatic position in Warsaw be accounted for, since in Belgrade and Prague, capitals of the states from the Little Entente, Romanian allies, as well as Poland, the situation was significantly different? From 1919 to 1939, Romania was represented in Belgrade by five chiefs of diplomatic mission. The shortest term lasted almost a year<sup>3</sup>, and the longest, eight years

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<sup>1</sup> A few details on Romanian diplomats accredited in Warsaw can be found in Nicolae Mareș’s study *Diplomați polonezi și români, la București și Varșovia, în perioada interbelică*, in idem, *Istorie – Diplomație. Eseuri*, vol. II, Iași, Editura Tipo Moldova, 2014, p. 213–225.

<sup>2</sup> Poland was represented in Bucharest by Aleksander Skrzyński (1919–1923), Jozef Wielowiejski (1923–1926), Jan Szembek (1927–1932), Mirosław Arciszewski (1932–1938), Roger Raczynski (1938–1940).

<sup>3</sup> Constantin Langa-Rășcanu headed the legation in Belgrade from August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1919 to August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920, but as chargé d’Affairs (AMAE, fond 77, L 23 – Constantin Langa-Rășcanu, Personal record, unpaginated. It is

(Theodor Emandi)<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, Romania was represented in Czechoslovakia, between 1920 and 1939, by six chiefs of diplomatic mission. The longest terms was held, as in the case of Belgrade, by Theodor Emandi (1<sup>st</sup> February 1928 – 15<sup>th</sup> December 1936), while the shortest belonged to Gheorghe Lecca (15<sup>th</sup> February – 1<sup>st</sup> May 1939). We can also see that two chiefs of mission were accredited both in Belgrade and Prague (Nicolae Filodor and Theodor Iamandi), taking into account the fact that there was a common diplomatic theme in the relations between Bucharest, Prague and Belgrade.

Matters developed in a similar way in the case of Greece and Turkey, who joined Romania and Yugoslavia as member states of the Balkanic Entente in 1934. Romania sent five chiefs of diplomatic mission in Athens, while in Turkey, Romanian authorities accredited six diplomats at the head of its diplomatic representation in the interwar period<sup>5</sup>.

What was the situation in other capitals? In Tirana, for instance, Romania sent seven chiefs of mission from 1925 to 1939, while in Bulgaria six Romanian ministers plenipotentiary worked between 1920 and 1939. Greater stability at the level of the delegation's leadership is to be found in Austria, since in 1920–1938 Romania was only represented by four chiefs of mission. We encounter the same situation in London, where there were four Romanian chiefs of legation during the interwar period.<sup>6</sup> Romania sent between five and seven chiefs of diplomatic mission in most states. It was also the case of Belgium, where Romania was represented by six chiefs of mission (Radu Tr. Djuvara had two terms of office), Switzerland and France (six mission chiefs, Victor Antonescu was accredited twice), Germany (five chiefs of mission, but Nicolae Petrescu-Comnen had two terms of office), Italy (five chiefs of mission, but Dimitrie I. Gr. Ghica was chief of legation twice), Portugal (seven chiefs of legation, but between 1922 and 1928 either the minister in Madrid, or the one in Paris were accredited in Lisbon). We encounter a different state of affairs in Hungary, where only three chiefs of legation were sent in the inter-war period.

### First Appointments for Chief of the Warsaw legation

After the establishment of official diplomatic relations between Romania and Poland in June 1919, the opening of a legation in Warsaw and the appointment of diplomat Alexandru G. Florescu as envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary<sup>7</sup> were sanctioned through a royal decree on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

Having entered diplomacy in 1890, Alexandru G. Florescu (1867–1925) worked as attaché at the Paris (1890–1891) and Vienna (1891–1892) legations, was then chancellor of the general consulate of Romania in Thessaloniki (1892–1893)<sup>8</sup>. He

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here mentioned that the diplomat held the leadership of the Belgrade representation. Also see *Anuar diplomatic și consular 1942*, București, Monitorul Oficial și Imprimeriile Statului, Imprimeria Națională, 1942, p. 182; Andrei Alexandru Căpușan, *Diplomați români de elită. O istorie – incompletă – a diplomației române prin diplomați*, vol. II, *Epoca modernă. Epoca contemporană, 1919–1947*, București, Ars Docendi, 2009, p. 96).

<sup>4</sup> *Organizarea instituțională a Ministerului Afacerilor Externe. Acte și documente*, vol. II, 1920–1947, edition coordinated by Ion Mamina, George G. Potra, Gheorghe Neacșu, Nicolae Nicolescu, București, Fundația Europeană Nicolae Titulescu, 2006, p. 557.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 547, 560–561.

<sup>6</sup> The legation was headed by chargés d'Affairs during the time Nicolae Titulescu was minister of Foreign Affairs (1927–1928, 1932–1936).

<sup>7</sup> Florin Anghel, *Construirea sistemului „cordon sanitaire”. Relații româno-polone 1919–1926*, Târgoviște, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2008, p. 62–63.

<sup>8</sup> *Anuarul diplomatic și consular al României pe 1894*, Bucuresci, Imprimeria Statului, 1894, p. 44.

became chief of cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1893<sup>9</sup>, while in the following years he was secretary of legation in Berlin (1894) and Saint Petersburg (1895–1899). He was also secretary general of the ministry for a while (1899–1901), which proves he had a strong connection with the minister and that he had become an important figure in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1911 he was appointed envoy extraordinary and class II minister plenipotentiary in Athens (1911–1913)<sup>10</sup>. Starting with April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1913, Florescu ended his mission in Athens as a result of the minister of Foreign Affairs having accepted his resignation.<sup>11</sup> He returned at the head of a diplomatic mission in August 1919, when he takes over the newly opened legation in Warsaw (1919–1924)<sup>12</sup>. The Romanian government thus entrusted the Poland mission to an experienced diplomat who had previously held the position of secretary-general of the ministry and had been minister in Athens. For Florescu, who has 52 by that time, the mission in Poland represented the re-launch of his diplomatic career in a position that presented a diplomat with quite a number of professional challenges.

At the time of Florescu's arrival in Poland, the diplomatic corps in Warsaw was only beginning to take shape. The Romanian diplomat was only preceded in the presentation his accreditation letters by the representatives of the United States of America, Vatican and Belgium<sup>13</sup>. Florescu's mission was not simple. He had to manage relations with a newly-founded state, with which Romania shared not only a border, but also a set of common issues. Al. Iacovaky, one of Florescu's collaborators, thought that the chief of the Warsaw legation had the mission to observe the extent to which Poland was a viable state with which one could collaborate in matters of regional security. This is how Al. Iacovaky portrayed Florescu: 'Its chief [of the Warsaw legation – my note A.V.] was a very intelligent man, eager to work and endowed with innate kindness.'<sup>14</sup> Reading the reports sent by Florescu to the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania we can notice these traits belonging to the Romanian diplomat, who played an important part in the development of Romanian-Polish relations. The prestige he had in Bucharest, as well as the connections he forged in Poland, led to Alexandru G. Florescu's endurance as the head of the legation for more than five years despite the changes that occurred on the political scene of Romania. The precarious state of his health, as well as his financial problems determined Florescu to request the termination of his mission in Warsaw in the summer of 1924. Forced by the circumstances, the minister of Foreign Affairs appointed the legation counsellor Constantin Laptew to manage the position.

In the autumn of 1924 discussions took place in Bucharest on the issue of appointing a new minister plenipotentiary in Warsaw. Information on the accreditation of politician Jean Th. Florescu in Warsaw appeared in this context. He however refused the position (he wanted the position in Paris instead), just as, allegedly, Nicolae Pennescu (for financial reasons or because of Poland's wet and humid climate), the then

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<sup>9</sup> AMAE, fond 77, F 13 – Alexandru G. Florescu, Copy of decree no. 43, 10<sup>th</sup> November 1893, signed Al. Lahovary, unpaginated.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, Copy of decree no. 6673, 4<sup>th</sup> Aprilie 1911, signed Titu Maiorescu, unpaginated.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, Request submitted by Al. G. Florescu to the president of the Counsel of Ministers, Bucharest, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1913, unpaginated. Titu Maiorescu's signature appears on the documents, accepting Florescu's resignation starting with 1<sup>st</sup> April 1913.

<sup>12</sup> See Florin Anghel, Nicolae Mareş, Dumitru Preda, *România – Polonia. Relații diplomatice*, I, 1918–1939, Bucureşti, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Florin Anghel, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> BAR, Mss., A. 2650 a, Al. Iacovaky, Amintiri, f. 65.

minister plenipotentiary of Romania at the Holy See<sup>15</sup>. Postponing the appointment of a chief of mission in Warsaw could have led to the deterioration of relations with Poland, which the Brătianu government and the minister of Foreign Affairs, I. G. Duca, did not want. This led to the solution of appointing a professional diplomat. Alexandru Iacovsky was chosen, who had been legation counselor in Warsaw between 1919 and 1921<sup>16</sup>. Thus, Iacovsky's experience in Poland, the good image he had in the ministry, where he was chief of Protocol, Staff and the Chancery of Orders and then director of the Directorate-General for Foreign Affairs were elements that weighed in his appointment as the head of the Polish legation. Moreover, Iacovsky had over two decades and a half experience' in diplomacy, as he had been hired by the ministry in 1899<sup>17</sup>, and according to some, 'also had some knowledge of Slavic languages'<sup>18</sup> and was 'the only Romanian diplomat in Poland in the interwar period with direct access to the Polish press'<sup>19</sup>.

For diplomat Alexandru Iacovsky, who had turned 49<sup>20</sup>, the mission in Warsaw was a first, since it was, in fact, the only term he served as chief of a diplomatic representation. Apparently, Iacovsky also had good connections with the political and cultural elite of Poland<sup>21</sup>, despite the fact that there were rumours of diplomatic incidents he was supposedly involved in circulating the Romanian press<sup>22</sup>.

Iacovsky's mission in Poland ended suddenly in mid-1927. He was replaced by the authorities in Bucharest by Carol (Citta) A. Davila. The latter was a politician who had had no contact with diplomacy until then. Thus, the Romanian leaders appointed a chief of mission external to diplomacy in Poland. Intelligent and charming, he had an evident setback from the point of view of his knowledge of international politics. There are several opinions on the appointment of Davila as chief of the diplomatic mission in Poland. In his memoir, Al. Iacovsky mentions the fact that Davila's appointment meant the removal of an inconvenient adversary from the political circles at home, someone influential in the Giurgiu town area<sup>23</sup>, while Constantin Argetoianu writes he was one to support Davila's wish to 'receive' the Warsaw legation before Barbu Știrbey, the then prime-minister<sup>24</sup>. In fact, Știrbey tried to appoint Davila minister plenipotentiary class II, offering him a position in the central administration first. As this was contrary to the laws of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since a newcomer to diplomacy appointed minister plenipotentiary could only hold a position abroad, one was found for him<sup>25</sup>. It

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> He was transferred from Bern to Warsaw in July 1919 (AMAE, fond 77, I 10 – Alexandru Iacovsky, Personal record, vol. II, unpaginated).

<sup>17</sup> In 1899, after finishing his university studies in Paris, the fresh Law graduate becomes supernumerary legation attaché. He then works in the central administration, as well as the Berlin, Sofia and Constantinople legations. In 1916, he becomes part of the diplomatic staff of the Switzerland mission, and in 1919 he leaves, with Florescu, to Warsaw (BAR, Mss, A. 2650 a, Al. Iacovsky, Amintiri, f. 22).

<sup>18</sup> Nicolae Mareș, *Lucian Blaga – diplomat*, in *VR*, no. 3–4, 2010, p. 68. His personal file stated that he spoke French and German and had some knowledge of English (AMAE, fond 77, I 10 – Alexandru Iacovsky, Personal record, vol. II, unpaginated).

<sup>19</sup> Nicolae Mareș, *Lucian Blaga. Diplomat la Varșovia*, București, Editura Fundației România de Măine, 2011, p. 103.

<sup>20</sup> Iacovsky was born on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1876 at Blăjani, Buzău county.

<sup>21</sup> Nicolae Mareș, *Lucian Blaga. Diplomat la Varșovia*, p. 64, 83–84.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup> BAR, Mss, A. 2650 a, Al. Iacovsky, Amintiri, f. 85.

<sup>24</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri*, vol. VIII, partea a VII-a (1926–1930), București, Editura Machiavelli, 1997, p. 132–134.

<sup>25</sup> AMAE, fond 77, D 57 – Carol A. Davila, Personal record, unpaginated.

is in this context that Davila was offered the Warsaw legation, a proposition Ion I. C. Brătianu, who followed Știrbey at the leadership of the government, approved of. Thus, on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1927<sup>26</sup>, Carol A. Davila, aged 41, was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary class II of Romania in Poland<sup>27</sup>.

### Warsaw: the beginning of a journey, the end of a career

The mission in Poland was, for Davila, a first. Despite being in Warsaw, the new diplomat did not neglect the connections with the decisional factors in Romania. He understood the fact that his being kept in diplomacy and the ultimate obtaining of a better position depended on the will of Bucharest leaders. After the National Peasants' Party came to power (1928), Davila pushed for to obtain the lead of the diplomatic mission in the United States of America. Finding out about the possible appointment of Davila at Washington from the Romanian press, the holder of the legation in the United States' capital, George Cretzianu, telegraphed his confusion to Bucharest. 'The associated press received a telegram from its correspondent in Bucharest, reprinted by the American newspapers, announcing an exchange between myself and Mr. Davila. On the one hand, I am informed that his friends are spreading the news that he is as good as engaged to senator Borah's daughter, so that his appointment in Washington would ensure the strong support of Romania in the United States government. Borah was neither daughter nor niece, and I am ready to accept a change of position for a serious work interest, but not to favour personal schemes'<sup>28</sup>. The Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs, G. G. Mironescu, informed Cretzianu, on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1929, that the legation in Washington would be included in the 'diplomatic movement' that he intended to create, suggesting that the diplomat write to him if he wished for any diplomatic mission in particular<sup>29</sup>. Cretzianu told Mironescu he was interested in two legations: Vatican and Warsaw. Nevertheless, the diplomat would have preferred being sent to Vatican, since he was afraid that the climate in Poland would worsen his health<sup>30</sup>.

The Romanian authorities eventually resorted to an exchange, confirming the rumours mentioned by Cretzianu. Through two royal decrees from July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1929, George Cretzianu<sup>31</sup>, a 64 year-old diplomat<sup>32</sup> at the end of his career, was appointed in Warsaw and Carol A. Davila replaced him as head of the diplomatic representation in Washington.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*. The decree was passed June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1927.

<sup>27</sup> Davila was born on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1886 and had a Bachelor's degree in Law. He was the son of playwright Alexandru Davila and grandson of doctor Carol Davila. He fought in World War I and then entered politics.

<sup>28</sup> AMAE, fond 77, D 57 – Carol A. Davila, Telegram no. 9302, Legațiunea din Washington, 12<sup>th</sup> January 1929, George Cretzianu to Grigore Gafencu, unpaginated).

<sup>29</sup> AMAE, fond 77, G 46 – George Cretzianu, vol. II, Draft of telegram no. 12440, București, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1929, G. G. Mironescu to George Cretzianu, unpaginated.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, Telegram no. 9356, Legațiunea din Washington, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1929, George Cretzianu to G. G. Mironescu, unpaginated.

<sup>31</sup> In 1913, Titu Maiorescu suggested George Cretzianu as minister plenipotentiary in Madrid. This was his first poste as chief of diplomatic mission after approximately 27 years from his entry in the ministry. His case is, however, particular, since between September 1898 and August 1911 he stopped working in diplomacy. After his experience in the capital of Spain (1913–1922) Cretzianu was entrusted with the legation in the United States of America (5<sup>th</sup> November 1926 – 15<sup>th</sup> July 1929) and the mission in Poland (*ibidem*, Personal record, unpaginated).

<sup>32</sup> Cretzianu was born on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1865, with more than 29 years' experience in the diplomatic corps of Romania (ACNSAS, fond D, file 8845, vol. 5, List of officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 11<sup>th</sup> September 1929, unpaginated).

Cretzianu's mission in Warsaw was short-lived, however, as he was withdrawn at the end of 1930 since he had already exceeded the retirement age and his health had worsened visibly<sup>33</sup>. Under these circumstances, the leadership of the diplomatic mission in Poland was given to Grigore Bilciurescu. He was appointed in Warsaw on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1931 and headed the legation until May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1932. A professional diplomat, Bilciurescu was experienced as chief of legation, since he had headed the missions in Norway and Bulgaria. Nevertheless, Grigore Gafencu, who held offices in the Ministry of foreign Affairs during the governing of the Peasants' National Party, was not thrilled by Bilciurescu's relocation from Sofia to Warsaw. Gafencu wrote: 'The appointment of Bilciurescu, a hard-working, but mediocre, civil servant, with a limited world view, lacking in political flair and the most elementary *usage du monde* seems shameful and, in fact, worthy of the regime of mediocrity established by Mironescu. With Cesianu in Paris, with poor Tașcă in Berlin and Bilciurescu in Warsaw, Mironescu can boast he is represented as faithfully as possible abroad.'<sup>34</sup>

Bilciurescu's relocation from Sofia might have been the result of the fact that the Romanian diplomat was not well seen in Bulgarian society in the context of negotiations between the representatives of the two countries on the topic of the sequester of Bulgarian goods in Romania. As early as December 1930 veiled attacks on Bilciurescu appeared in the Bulgarian press, accusing him of having allegedly 'hampered the solving the issue of sequestered goods in Romania', speaking of a possible move of his in Belgrade<sup>35</sup>. Even if the Romanian minister of Foreign Affairs assured Bilciurescu, in December 1930, of his support, Mironescu proposed that the chief of the Sofia legation take over as head of the diplomatic mission in Warsaw in February 1931. Grigore Bilciurescu accepted his new task, but stayed for a while longer in Bulgaria to finalize some negotiations. Eventually, at the end of March 1931, he presented the recall letters, but only took over the head of the Poland legation two months later<sup>36</sup>.

Diplomat Bilciurescu, aged 57<sup>37</sup>, had a short mission, effectively leading the legation for almost a year.<sup>38</sup> The reasons of his replacement are connected to the perspective the Bucharest leaders had on his relations with Poland and the powerful neighbour from the East, the Soviet Union, in the context of on-going Romanian-Soviet negotiations<sup>39</sup>.

### From 'Titulescu's people' to king Charles II's 'cronies'

The person chosen to lead the Warsaw legation was Victor Cădere. Born on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1891, PhD in Law and graduate of the School of Political Sciences in Paris,

<sup>33</sup> AMAE, fond 77, G 46 – George Cretzianu, vol. II, Telegram no. 4397, Warsaw, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1930, George Cretzianu to G. G. Mironescu, unpaginated. Cretzianu presented his recall letters on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1930. He died in January 1931 in Vienna (*ibidem*, Telegram no. 4326, Bucharest, 25<sup>th</sup> January 1931, G. G. Mironescu to the Romanian legation in Vienna, unpaginated).

<sup>34</sup> Grigore Gafencu, *Însemnări politice*, București, Humanitas, 1991, p. 61.

<sup>35</sup> AMAE, fond 77, B 39 – Grigore Bilciurescu, Telegram no. 2842, Sofia, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1930, Bilciurescu to G. G. Mironescu, unpaginated.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, Telegram no. 1457, Warsaw, 27<sup>th</sup> May 1931, Grigore Bilciurescu to D. I. Ghica, unpaginated.

<sup>37</sup> Bilciurescu was born on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1874 and had worked in Romanian diplomacy for almost 40 years.

<sup>38</sup> At the end of his mission in Poland, Bilciurescu should have arrived in Vatican. After this possibility fell through, he was supposed to go to Vienna. Due to problems with agreement and some political calculations in Bucharest, he was eventually accredited in Holland.

<sup>39</sup> Alexandru-Murad Mironov, *Vremea încercărilor. Relații româno-sovietice 1930–1940*, București, Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2013, p. 103–120.

Cădere was a university professor and member of the National Peasants' Party<sup>40</sup>. At the same time, he had close connections with king Charles II, a factor which contributed to his appointment in the position available in Warsaw. Although he had not worked in diplomacy, Cădere held several public offices<sup>41</sup>, among which director of State Safety and headed, at the end of World War I, the Romanian mission in Siberia. Being, thus, experienced in the public life and having political support at the highest level, Cădere seemed to be the appropriate person for the Poland legation, which was also an important observation point of the situation in the Soviet Union. Moreover, Victor Cădere had manifested his interest in working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>42</sup> on multiple occasions, so that his appointment as chief of the diplomatic mission in Warsaw was the fulfilment of one of his wishes.

Cădere's mission started in July 1932 and ended in the summer of 1935. Cădere's recall was not well received by the authorities in Warsaw, the decision being perceived as a measure taken by N. Titulescu to further dilute his relations with Poland<sup>43</sup>. Indeed, Titulescu, who was not on good terms with Romania's minister in Warsaw and quite cool towards the chief of Polish diplomacy, too, effected Cădere's replacement. As a result of his recall from Warsaw, Cădere should have occupied the position of minister plenipotentiary in the capital of Brazil, but for personal reasons did not accept the mission, being appointed, in the autumn of 1936, minister of Romania in Belgrade<sup>44</sup>.

Cădere was replaced by Constantin Vișoianu, a young diplomat (aged 38) promoted by Nicolae Titulescu<sup>45</sup>. As a result of the tensions in the Bucharest–Warsaw relations, Vișoianu effectively took over the legation leadership in January 1936<sup>46</sup>, but his stay in Poland would not be long. Perceived as the exponent of Titulescu's vision in Warsaw, and one of the members of 'Titulescu's group', Vișoianu was among the recalled diplomats after his 'patron' was replaced as head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>47</sup>.

He was succeeded in Warsaw by Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu (44 years old)<sup>48</sup>, son of the writer, diplomat and politician Duiliu Zamfirescu. He had never worked in Warsaw before, but his experience in the central administration of the ministry, as well as in several legations (Berlin, Hague) qualified him to lead the diplomatic representation in Poland<sup>49</sup>. For Zamfirescu, the position in Warsaw was a great step ahead, since

<sup>40</sup> For details on Cădere, see Ioana Cazacu, *Victor Cădere – diplomat (1919–1944)*, doctoral thesis, Iași, 2012, p. 12–15.

<sup>41</sup> He was a member of the Romanian Parliament, as well as secretary-general of the Ministry of Justice.

<sup>42</sup> Ioana Cazacu, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 132. Argetoianu also recounts in his memoirs that king Charles II wanted to keep Cădere in the Polish capital since the diplomat had received tasks from the sovereign several times without Titulescu knowing (Constantin Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. I, 2 februarie 1935 – 31 decembrie 1936, edited by Stelian Neagoe, București, Editura Machiavelli, 1998, p. 119).

<sup>44</sup> Ioana Cazacu, *op. cit.*, p. 16. Victor Cădere refused this new appointment under the excuse of his health and the young ages of his children (four and one, respectively).

<sup>45</sup> Vișoianu was born on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1897 and studied Law and Philosophy in Bucharest. He was one of Titulescu's collaborators as early as the 1920s, being propelled by the latter secretary of the Mixed Arbitration Commission in Paris. Vișoianu entered diplomacy in 1933, when he was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary in Hague. For more details on his career, see: Constantin Vișoianu, *Misiunile mele (culegere de documente)*, edited by George G. Potra, Nicolae Dinu, București, Editura Enciclopedică, 1997, p. 11–17; Andrei Alexandru Căpușan, *op. cit.*, p. 174–176.

<sup>46</sup> Constantin Vișoianu, *op. cit.*, p. 84–86.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19, 137.

<sup>48</sup> Zamfirescu was born on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1892 in Rome and had Bachelor's degrees in Letters and Law (AMAE, fond 77, Z 17 – Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu, Personal record, vol. 1, f. 4).

<sup>49</sup> See details in *Anuar diplomatic și consular 1942*, p. 158.

he had previously been chief of the Brazil and Portugal legations, diplomatic missions without great importance in the diplomatic network of Romania. The period when Zamfirescu headed the legation in Warsaw, in November 1936 – April 1938, was one of a ‘rapprochement’ between Romania and Poland. Besides daily activities, Zamfirescu took part in meetings between the political leaders of the two states. It seems he was also the one to broach the topic of upgrading the diplomatic missions in Bucharest and Warsaw to the rank of embassies<sup>50</sup>, an issue solved favourably through the royal decree of April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1938<sup>51</sup>. Nevertheless, Zamfirescu was relocated to Rome starting with April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938 and Richard Franasovici became the holder of the Warsaw position. Apparently, Zamfirescu’s relocation to Rome was a reward offered by the king to the Romanian diplomat, since he did not have the required ‘status’ to be ambassador. Zamfirescu was merely minister plenipotentiary class II and it would have been too great of a career leap for a professional diplomat to head the first embassy of Romania. Consequently, the king decided to appoint an ‘outsider’ in Warsaw.

### Romanian Ambassadors in Poland

Starting with May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1938, Franasovici was appointed head of the Warsaw embassy. Born in 1883<sup>52</sup>, he was one of Charles II’s cronies and had a vast experience in Romanian politics. His political career, however, had circumstantial connections with the foreign affairs policies of Romania, which could have represented a disadvantage for the chief of a diplomatic mission. Nonetheless, the king wanted to have someone trustworthy in Warsaw and he was not bothered by the fact that Franasovici was not experienced in foreign affairs. He took over the lead of the mission at the end of May 1938<sup>53</sup>, a few days after the visit of the Romanian prime-minister in Poland, patriarch Miron Cristea. Despite the occurrence, in 1938 and in the first months of 1939, of several tense moments in the Bucharest-Warsaw relations, Richard Franasovici was kept as head of the embassy until August 1939. The end of his mission in Warsaw was closely connected to the king’s decision to replace Gheorghe Tătărescu from the leadership of the Romanian embassy in Paris<sup>54</sup>. In this situation, the Romanian sovereign decided to appoint Franasovici in Paris, since, from his point of view, the latter had acquitted himself well of his duties.

A professional diplomat, Gheorghe Grigorcea, was appointed in the Polish capital instead. Born on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1878, in Carapciu on Siret, which was then a part of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Grigorcea studied Law in Innsbruck, and from 1909 onwards was employed in the imperial diplomatic service<sup>55</sup>. In 1919, Grigorcea was

<sup>50</sup> Constantin Argetoianu, *Însemnări zilnice*, vol. III, 1 iulie 1937 – 31 decembrie 1937, edited by Stelian Neagoe, București, Editura Machiavelli, 2001, p. 25–27.

<sup>51</sup> Through royal decree no. 1640 the Romanian legation in Warsaw was upgraded to the rank of embassy starting with 1<sup>st</sup> May 1938 (Florin Anghel, Nicolae Mareș, Dumitru Preda, *op. cit.*, I, 1918–1939, p. 192–193).

<sup>52</sup> AMAE, fond 77, F 42 – Richard Franasovici, Personal record, unpaginated. He had graduated from the Faculty of Law of Bucharest University and declared he spoke French, German, English and Russian.

<sup>53</sup> Franasovici arrived in Warsaw on 26<sup>th</sup> May and had meetings with representatives of the Polish ministry of Foreign Affairs the following day. Initially, the ceremony of handing in accreditation letters was scheduled for May 31<sup>st</sup>, but was postponed from the beginning of June 1938 due to protocol-related issues (*ibidem*, Telegram no. 2774, Warsaw Embassy, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1938, R. Franasovici to N. Petrescu-Comnen, unpaginated).

<sup>54</sup> In fact, Tătărescu wanted to put an end to his diplomatic adventure, which he perceived as an estrangement from the home affairs of Romania.

<sup>55</sup> Nicolae Mareș, *Gheorghe (Georges) Grigorcea. Un diplomat prea puțin cunoscut și apreciat*, in „Diplomat Club”, an XIX, no. 8–11 (233–236), 2011, p. 14; idem, *Gheorghe (Georges) Grigorcea – eminența*



appointed counsellor with the Romanian Commission for liquidation in Vienna, and in 1920 he became legation counsellor. The diplomat had a brilliant career in the ministry's central administration. He was head of several directorates within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and at the beginning of 1939 was advanced to the rank of ambassador. At the same time, starting with December 24<sup>th</sup>, 1938, Grigorcea was secretary general of the ministry<sup>56</sup>. Thus, the moment he was appointed ambassador of Romania in Poland, Gheorghe Grigorcea was occupying a key position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as one of the most experienced Romanian diplomats, despite the fact that he had only previously headed the Bruxelles legation (1930–1932). The minister of Foreign Affairs, Grigore Gafencu, needed someone trustworthy in Warsaw, which is why he suggested Grigorcea to the king. He received the agreement on August 28<sup>th</sup>, the second day after he had an audience with the king<sup>57</sup>, and at the end of the month he was already in the Polish capital. The German attack on Poland, however, prevented Grigorcea from submitting the accreditation letters to the president of the Polish state. In full war, he left the territory of Poland and returned to the country alongside the embassy staff. Once in Bucharest, Grigore Gafencu delegated him to provisionally occupy the position of secretary general of the ministry<sup>58</sup>.

### Conclusions

From the Romanian chiefs of mission in Poland, the longest mandate belonged to Alexandru G. Florescu (July 16, 1919 – September 1, 1924), and the shortest to Gheorghe Grigorcea, who arrived in Warsaw at the end of August 1939. Six of the ten diplomats who were in charge of the diplomatic mission in Poland held the position for less than two years, which points to a certain instability of the Warsaw position.

The youngest chief of mission in Warsaw was Constantin Vişoianu, 38 at the time, while Victor Cădere was appointed legation chief at 41 and Richard Franasovici became ambassador at 55. The oldest of the 10 representatives of Romania in Poland was George Cretzianu, who occupied the position at 64.

Seven career diplomats and three chiefs of mission from outside the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (C. Davila, V. Cădere and R. Franasovici) were appointed heads of the diplomatic representation in Warsaw. One must make a note of the fact that all three chiefs of diplomatic mission appointed on 'political criteria' continued to fill positions in the diplomatic corps of Romania after leaving the mission in Warsaw. Moreover, after their experience in Poland, C. Davila and R. Franasovici were appointed in Washington and Paris. Consequently, while Warsaw was a diplomatic launch pad for diplomats outside the profession, the same was not true for career diplomats. Only Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu was appointed in Rome after the Warsaw mission ended, in an important position for Romanian diplomacy. In fact, it was an 'intermediary position' for only two of the ten diplomats (Grigore Bilciurescu and Al. D. Zamfirescu had headed diplomatic missions before Poland, too), while for five of them (Alexandru G. Florescu, Alexandru Iacovaky, George Cretzianu, Constantin

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*cenuşie a diplomaţiei româneşti din perioada interbelică*, in idem, *Istorie – Diplomaţie. Eseuri*, vol. II, p. 493–498.

<sup>56</sup> He shared secretary general attributions with Alexandru Cretzianu.

<sup>57</sup> Regele Carol al II-lea al României, *Insemnări zilnice. 1937–1951*, vol. II, 13 martie – 15 decembrie 1939, edited by Nicolae Răuş, Bucureşti, Editura Scripta, 1997, p. 191.

<sup>58</sup> Nicolae Mareş, *Gheorghe (Georges) Grigorcea – eminenţa cenuşie a diplomaţiei româneşti din perioada interbelică*, p. 497.

Vișoianu, Gheorghe Grigorcea) Warsaw was their last mission abroad, although some continued their diplomatic career in the ministry's central administration (Alexandru Iacovaky and Gheorghe Grigorcea). Seen from this perspective, Romania's diplomatic representation in Poland was rather a place where careers ended than a transitional stage to the leadership of diplomatic missions, as in the case of the Romanian representations in the Scandinavian countries, for example. On the other hand, though, the Bucharest authorities generally sent experienced diplomats to Warsaw, people who had stood out in the ministry's central administration or the leadership of diplomatic missions, as well as mission chiefs from outside the world of diplomacy, who had a long-standing experience in home affairs (R. Franasovici) or who had held other positions in the administration of the Romanian state (V. Cădere). This meant that the Warsaw post was important for the Romanian diplomacy, from the perspective of the Romanian-Polish alliance, but also because it was an observation point for the developments in Northern Europe. Nonetheless, just one of the diplomatic mission chiefs in Warsaw worked in the Polish capital before being appointed as chief of legation (Alexandru Iacovaky).

The intellectual profile of the chiefs of diplomatic representation in Warsaw is characteristic of the Romanian diplomatic elite of the interwar years. All ten diplomats had studies in Law, but some also had complementary specialisations. Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu, for instance, had a bachelor's degree in Letters from Paris, but had also attended *École libre des Science Politique* in the French capital, where Victor Cădere also studied.

The frequent changes at the head of the diplomatic mission in Poland were based on political decisions generated by the developments in Romania's home affairs (the appointments of C. Davila, V. Cădere, C. Vișoianu) and king Charles II's involvement in foreign affairs decisions (Vișoianu's replacement, Alexandru Duiliu Zamfirescu and Richard Franasovici's appointments). On the other hand, we must also consider the diplomats' personal issues. Alexandru G. Florescu's health worsened due to the Polish climate, one of the reasons why he asked to be replaced from as head of the Warsaw legation. Additionally, some diplomats had higher ambitions, seeking to obtain positions in other world capitals. One of the typical cases is Carol A. Davila, who did his best to secure the position of chief of the Washington legation.

FROM ALEXANDRU G. FLORESCU TO GHEORGHE GRIGORCEA.  
THE CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSION OF ROMANIA IN POLAND (1919–1939)  
(Summary)

*Keywords:* diplomacy, interwar period, Romania, Poland.

The present study proposes an analysis of chiefs of diplomatic mission of Romania in Poland from 1919 to 1939, looking to see who were the ten diplomats sent to represent the Romanian state in Warsaw. We also try to notice if they have any personal or professional connections with Poland or Northern Europe, and if Poland was a professional attraction in the career of Romanian diplomats. We noticed that seven career diplomats and three chiefs of mission from outside the Romanian Ministry of Foreign were appointed heads of the diplomatic representation in Warsaw. For five of the Romanian diplomats Warsaw was their last mission abroad, although some continued their diplomatic career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Bucharest authorities generally sent experienced diplomats to Poland because the Warsaw post was important for the Romanian diplomacy. Nonetheless, just one of the diplomatic mission chiefs in Warsaw worked in the Polish capital before being appointed as chief of legation.