

## RECOGNITION OF THE UNION OF BESSARABIA WITH ROMANIA – HISTORICAL AND INTERNATIONAL LAW ISSUES

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**Abstract:** *This paper deals with the recognition of Sfatul Țării act of 27 March 1918 - the legal basis of the Bessarabia union with Romania - in international law, by the states who signed the 1920 Peace Treaty of Paris and by the Soviet Russia/Soviet Union. The final agreement of France, United Kingdom and Italy has been made possible because of a very active Romanian diplomacy and of some extreme measures like maintaining military troops in Hungary or abstaining from intervention in Soviet Russia even if the Western Powers insisted on this matter. US and Japan who did not sign and/or ratify the 1920 Peace Treaty of Paris did not refuse explicitly the recognition of the Bessarabia union with Romania. The Soviet Union recognition was de facto accomplished (at least according to the interpretation of the circumstances) after this country signed in 1933, together with Romania and other states, the Convention for definition of aggression. The absence of de jure recognition from the international community cannot lead to the conclusion that Bessarabia union with Romania has not been done according to the international law. As this paper shows, Bessarabia proclaimed its autonomy inside the Russian empire, then its independence and the union with Romania, in full respect of the self-determination principle.*

**Keywords:** *Bessarabia; peace; recognition; Romania; Russian empire; Soviet Russia; treaty, union*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Recognition of the union act of the Bessarabia Union with Romania on March 27, 1918 has met difficulties just from the very first moments. The Ukrainian Rada has protested against the Romanian Government, and the response came on April 20, 1918. The Romanian Government's note proved the Romanian majoritarian character of the territories between Prut and Dniestr, the accusations from the Ukrainian side being rejected. At Kiev, a similar request has been formulated on May 5 and it was rejected again on June 19. The Bolshevik government in Petrograd had the same approach, sending a protest note to the Central Powers. Although on 2 November 1917 Russia's Declaration of Peoples' Rights by which the peoples of the Russian Empire had the right to self-determination was passed, Foreign Affairs Commissioner Gheorghe Cicerin protested to the Central Powers about "Bessarabia's annexation by Romania". Germany announced that objection to the Bucharest government but the position of Romania and Germany was the same, as Alexandru Marghiloman, prime-minister at that time, considered: Russia had already recognized the secession of Bessarabia under the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

The Treaty of Peace signed at Buftea with the Central Powers implicitly recognized the union of Bessarabia with Romania. Austro-Hungary, at that time before the beginning of its dissolution, recognized this act in exchange for Romania's "friendly" attitude (the lack of any claims to Transylvania, Bucovina and Banat).

In the context of resuming the offensive on the West Front, Germany was ready to formally recognize the union with Bessarabia. There was no time for discussions on this issue due to the Romania's return to the war operations in November, 1918. In this context, the US Secretary of State at Iași, Charles Vopicka, went to Chișinău on November 3, 1918 to officially declare that his country supports the membership of Bessarabia in the new Romanian unitary state.

After March 27, 1918 Bessarabia was very close or even in some cases inside the theatres of military operations. The Dniester was not yet a recognized border with the USSR. In December 1918 a Bolshevik offensive took place and the Dniester was forced into the Hotin area, the offensive being rejected by the Romanian army. The French Army temporarily occupied Odessa and Chișinău to help the Ukrainian anti-Bolshevik offensive. A junction of French military troops

with Romanian troops was made in Chişinău. After the departure of German troops from the territory of Ukraine, the Ukrainians began their incursions over the Dniester.

In this context, the general opinion was that the union of Bessarabia with Romania will come naturally. As early as December 1918, the French Government created a group of experts to establish the frontiers that would result from the peace plan. On behalf of France, Emmanuel de Martonne was appointed to set the borders of Romania. He attributed Romania the entire territory between Prut and Dniester, the used argument being the percentage of 72% of the Romanian population. Not only the ethnic factor has been taken into account, but also the contribution to the war and the position on Bessarabia. France took note that Romania did not make claims related to Bessarabia during the military conflict, considering that the annexation of this province was the effect of exercising the right to self-determination. The French prime-minister Georges Clemenceau said on the occasion of the opening of the Peace Conference at Paris: “the fact that the issue of Bessarabia was to be regulated in favour of Romania constitute an element that cannot be neglected” (Micu, 2011:112).

We may conclude that since the proclamation of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania on March 27, 1918 to the Peace Conference, the Western powers did not challenge this act, on the contrary they considered it as an effect of the right to self-determination that they encouraged. With the beginning of this Conference, the idea of correlating the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia on the basis of the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime appears: it is believed that a new Russia, liberated from Bolshevism, should be given certain concessions. The evolution of the military situation has made this idea to remain only at the project stage but its existence shows the additional difficulties that have existed with the official opening of the Peace Conference.

## 2. THE PROCESS OF RECOGNITION

The Peace Conference began on January 18, 1919. The issue of recognizing the Union of the other historical provinces, except Bessarabia, with Romania was somewhat simpler because the successor states of Austria-Hungary were present at the negotiations. Soviet Russia was not represented and thus the issue of the recognition of the union of Bessarabia with Romania has a special

status, and this region had not been part from an enemy-state of Entente, before the war.

Meanwhile, the Bolshevik attacks on the Dniester border have been resumed, the last attack of this kind being rejected by the Romanian troops on February 14, 1919. Soviet Russia closely observed the Paris Peace Conference, the diplomacy of this country being strongly involved in the foreground of the Bessarabia problem. The policy of Soviet Russia was pursued on three levels simultaneously: subversive actions and Bolshevik propaganda; armed attacks on the vulnerable points of the border with Romania; the attempt to influence the opinion of the Western allies regarding the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania.

The issue of Bessarabia is addressed for the first time on February 8, 1919. The British representatives insisted on the application of the ethnic principle but pointed out that it is important to bear in mind that the possible subsequent reproach of the Soviet Russia according to which it would be deprived of territories belonging to it, taking advantage of the precarious situation of the new Bolshevik State must be avoided. The French representative mentioned that this point of view corresponds to the principle of not taking into account the military occupations but showed that Bessarabia was forcedly annexed by the Russian Empire in 1812. The American, Italian and also British experts expressed doubts about the decision of *Sfatul Ţării* (doubts to be formally expressed by the Soviet Russia), but the Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu rejected these arguments on 28 February 1919. The Report of the Central Territorial Commission would recommend the establishment of the Romania's borders on the Dniester. However, this report would be disputed by the so-called Russian Political Conference in Paris, made up of diplomats of the former Russian Empire, and on March 9, 1919 this institution presented a memorandum against that report. The former high officials of the Russian Empire had other opinions before the opening of the Peace Conference (Micu, 2011:114).

The imminent recognition of the border between Romania and Soviet Russia on the Dniester made the Bolshevik efforts against Romania to intensify. Thus, the Soviet Commissioner Gheorghii Cicerin said: “We have to act, otherwise the Romanian's border on Dniester will be recognized”. A plan of the Red Army's offensive against Romania was adopted in Tiraspol, but the start of General Denikin's

offensive redirected the military forces to counteract it.

The Central Territorial Commission recommended to the Council of Foreign Ministers of Allied Powers the recognition of the union of Bessarabia with Romania. These recommendations were initially rejected by the US Secretary of State Robert Lansing, who stated that there was no competence of the Peace Commission with regard to a territory of a state which was not an enemy of the Allied Powers. In the Lansing's view, no territorial changes could be made to Russia without the consent of that state, expressed by a legitimate government.

But Bessarabia had gone through all the stages that justified the recognition of the union with Romania: the autonomy in relation to Russia, the declaration of independence on January 24, 1918 and later of the union with Romania on March 27, 1918. All these actions, in this succession, correspond to the application of the principle of the peoples' self-determination, stated by the US President Woodrow Wilson.

Since the Bessarabia problem has begun to become more complicated that it seemed at the beginning of the peace talks, the Romanian Government has adopted a new strategy: it has continued talks in Paris but has begun negotiations both with the Soviet Russia and the neighbouring countries. The representatives of France and Great Britain have conditioned the final recognition of the union of Bessarabia for the withdrawal of the Romanian troops from Budapest.

In addition to the US hesitations on the circumstances of the declaration of the union of Bessarabia, the French and British governments have become increasingly reserved as efforts to stop the establishment of communism in Russia proved to be futile. The French Prime-Minister Georges Clemenceau sent a letter to Admiral Kolceak on behalf of the Allies in January 1920 promising to assign Bessarabia in exchange for continuing the struggle against the Soviet power. Interestingly, the French Prime Minister considered at the time that Bessarabia should have been attributed to Ukraine, because it needed a solid Ukraine, a strong state between the USSR and Europe, and a guarantee against the expansion of Bolshevism in Europe. However, Romania had a tremendous advantage in this complicated situation: the presence of its military troops in Budapest. Alexandru Vaida - Voevod reported that during his visit to Paris to boost the works of the Peace Conference, France asked Romania to evacuate its territories beyond the western border

as a price for the recognition of the union. Romania sought to delay this withdrawal as much as possible, invoking "technical" reasons until the recognition of the union.

Romania still faced another great challenge in dealing with the Allies regarding the recognition of its union. France expected a Romanian-Polish alliance to launch an offensive against the Soviet Russia. Romania, however, had a more reserved attitude towards this initiative, as General Denikin was in favour of Bessarabia's reassignment to Russia (Micu, 2011:122).

Romania has initiated parallel diplomatic contacts with the USSR. In the first stage, Soviet Russia accepted the solution of this problem in favour of Romania. The opening was due to the white-guard military offensive and the imminence of an attack by Poland, supported by France. A neutral Romania in this context was extremely important, hence the availability of dialogue. In fact, this was the continuation of the foreign policy started with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty: accepting the loss of any fixed-term territories, to be recovered by ideological pressure or armed force.

In this complex negotiation process, Romania maintained its military presence in Hungary, with the withdrawal being delayed by the transition from the Vaida-Voevod government to the Averescu government. The withdrawal of March 1920 led to progress in the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia, the ambassadors of the Allied states agreeing to accept the legal consequences of the act of 27 March 1918. The US continued to hesitate, even if Romania agreed with France and the United Kingdom to have an official reference to the recognition of minority rights.

Soviet Russia was still preoccupied with stopping any possible outside armed aggression, as the Red Army was very vulnerable. For this reason, Soviet Russia has placed a new condition in the diplomatic negotiations: conditional on the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania of the obligation of Romania's neutrality in the event of a Soviet Russia conflict with a third state.

These first diplomatic contacts were to be followed by others, much better outlined, in the form of recognizing the inviolability of the borders, after the signing of the treaty recognizing the Union of Bessarabia with Romania on 28 October 1920. Representatives of France, Great Britain, Italy and Japan (the ambassador of this country to Paris signed a few days later), as well as those of Romania (Take Ionescu and Dimitrie Ghica) signed this treaty. The US did not sign it. Soviet Russia challenged him right from the

moment of signing, the protest note being addressed to the signatory parties on November 1, 1920. This ended a first period in which many difficulties had been struck since the proclamation of the Union for its partial international recognition. We are talking about the conclusion of a first stage, because the signing of this treaty formed the subjective belief of the political class in Romania that the Bessarabia problem was thus finally settled. The ratification of the treaty and the subsequent negotiations with the USSR were considered to be minor problems in relation to the persuasion effort towards Western powers to recognize the Union of Bessarabia (Micu, 2011:123).

The Treaty was ratified by the United Kingdom in April 1922, by Romania in May 1922 and by France in April 1924. On the occasion of the French Parliament vote, the USSR People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs made a protest, considering this ratification as an inadmissible external interference during the Romanian-Soviet negotiations. Italy will ratify this treaty only in May 1927, considering it is important to give Romania and the USSR time to resolve the Bessarabia issue bilaterally. The United Kingdom's intervention, which considered the ratification of this treaty by Italy as very important, was decisive. The USSR aimed to prevent ratification of the treaty by European allies. The failure of this policy will direct the USSR in an entirely unexpected direction: initiating talks with Japan. This country signed in January 1925 a convention with the USSR on the settlement of the problem of the north of Sahalin, occupied in 1918 (Nouzille, 2005:120). The signing of this convention will eventually lead to Japan's implicit commitment not to ratify the Union of Bessarabia's Treaty of Recognition that it had signed in 1920. Soviet Foreign Commissioner Gheorghii Cicerin gave clear instructions on channelling efforts to hinder the ratification of the treaty by Japan.

The first contacts between the two countries took place in connection with the signing of the Convention on Principles of Cooperation between the USSR and Japan of January 20, 1925, when an exchange of notes took place between their representatives. Soviet Ambassador Karakhan said on this occasion that "on October 28, 1920, five states, including Japan, signed an agreement in Paris that acknowledged the annexation of Romania to the territory of Bessarabia belonging to the USSR". Considering good relations between the USSR and Japan, the Soviet government says it hopes Japan will not ratify this treaty. In his note,

Japanese Ambassador Ioshizava said that as long as the treaty is not ratified by all signatory European powers, the Government of Japan does not intend to ratify it.

After the ratification of the treaty by Italy, the situation of Japan has become more complicated and the Soviet insistence has been resumed with greater intensity. Karakhan considered "the occupation of Bessarabia" depended on Japan, and ratification would mean that Japan join the struggle the United Kingdom is taking against the USSR. At a meeting with Soviet representative Dovgalevski, Japanese Foreign Minister Dabuty said the issue of ratification had not been officially announced and told that a Romanian minister Aurel Ion Vassiliu was accredited in Tokyo to meet with Prime Minister Tanaka, in order to know the Japanese position on the issue of Bessarabia. Dabuty opposed ratification but showed that there was a strong pressure on the Japanese government by the British, French and Italian diplomatic corps. In this context, the meeting between Dovgalevski and Tanaka took place on May 24, 1927, when the issue of Bessarabia was discussed. The Soviet diplomat said the USSR hoped the Japanese government would not want to worsen relations with Moscow and not ratify the Treaty of Paris. The Prime Minister of Japan has shown he is aware that ratification would be an unfair act against the USSR, but the refusal to ratify it would have been interpreted by signatory states as an unfair act to them after Japan signed it. Tanaka said his government is in a difficult situation, but promised to resolve this issue, given Japan's friendly policy towards the USSR. Japan eventually preferred a non-aggression treaty with the USSR rather than ratification of a treaty that would have attracted its hostility (Țăcu, 2016).

The accreditation of an ambassador to Tokyo from Romania in 1927 was late. From governments after 1918, it was a great negligence not to put a close relationship with Japan. During the Paris Conference and later, during the ratification of the Peace Treaty, Romania did not have adequate diplomatic representation in Japan. During the visit to Russia on 6 May 1917 Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu contacted the Japanese ambassador to this country and sent him the desire to establish diplomatic relations. Japan was the only country in the Entente camp with which Romania did not yet have diplomatic relations. Brătianu has realized that Japan will be able to help Romania in achieving the objectives that warranted the entry into the war (Scumpieru, 2017:25). Nicolae Xenopol was appointed

Ambassador in September 1917, presented his letters of accreditation to the Emperor of Japan in Tokyo, but died on December 18, 1917. The consequence was the failure to sign the Agreement for Establishing Diplomatic Relations between Romania and Japan. It is considered that the lack of signing of this Agreement does not mean that there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries, and the signing would have been strictly formal (Scumpieru, 2017:28). The Romanian Legation in Tokyo continued to function *de facto* through the work of Alexandru Bianu, the former private secretary of Nicolae Xenopol, until August 1918. At the request of the Romanian Government, the Netherlands Legation took over the representation of Romania's interests in Japan. Between June and July 1920, Crown Prince Carol paid a visit to Japan, but the Romanian authorities did not take advantage of this moment to resume diplomatic relations at the level of representation through the ambassador.

It is interesting to note that in a report on December 4, 1929, to the minister of foreign affairs, the Romanian diplomat George Stoicescu, who was staying for a period in Tokyo, mentioned after a meeting with the same Yoshizawa:

I did not have the impression that Japan would have made any written commitment to the ratification of the treaty. However, I am convinced that Japan does not want to raise the issue of ratification, before resolving the main pending economic and political issues that it still has to deal with Russia.

At that time, the Romanian diplomacy considered it was still possible to ratify the Peace Treaty in Paris by Japan, the same Romanian diplomat said:

if from an unexpected cause there would be some coldness between these relationships, only in that context we could take advantage of the new situation and get the right moment to get ratification (Rădulescu, 2018).

The same thinking prevailed in 1938, when Alexandru Crețianu formulated a report arguing the possibility of ratification of the Treaty of Paris by Japan, in the context in which the Japanese ambassador to the USSR had evoked this possibility to some Romanian diplomats (Ciupercă, 1996:38).

Romania tried to achieve the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia by the Soviet Russia / USSR both before and immediately after the signing of the 1920 treaty. A first attempt to reach a

compromise, subsequent to the signing of that treaty was the Warsaw negotiations in 1921 between the envoys of the two states (Filality and Karakhan respectively). These discussions will be influenced by Lenin's position of August 21, 1921, which puts the issue of Bessarabia in a totally unfavourable sense of recognition of the union of this province with Romania. Soviet diplomats insisted in these negotiations on the link between recognition and the payment of sums that would have accounted for the share of Bessarabia in the public debt of the Russian Empire, equivalent to the value of the public property of Bessarabia taken over by Romania (Micu, 2011:155). After 1922, the USSR regained its international stance and was taken into account by the great European powers. As a result, Romania's position in the bilateral negotiations is greatly weakened.

The delegates of Romania and the USSR met in Vienna in March 1924, the issue of the Union of Bessarabia being put forward with substantive arguments. The position of Soviet diplomats was that the *Sfatul Țării* had no right to decide on such an important issue. In the Soviet vision, the *Sfatul Țării* were organized with the sole purpose of temporarily managing Bessarabia until the convening of the Bessarabia Constituent Assembly. The meeting of 27 March 1918 was seen as one that occurred in the face of non-compliance with its own rules. At the meeting of 27 November 1918, when the decision on the incorporation of Bessarabia into Romania was made, 46 out of 162 members of the council were present and this issue was not put to the vote. The decisions of *Sfatul Țării* were considered by the Soviet side to be taken under the pressure from the Romanian military occupation. The USSR has advocated in these negotiations that the Council's decisions cannot be recognized and that a referendum is necessary in Bessarabia. The treaty signed in 1920 was for the first time officially considered by the USSR to have no legal value (Geblescu, 2013:121).

The Romanian delegation responded through an official memo to these considerations. The presentation of the contents of this memorandum is fundamental for the qualification of the act of 27 March 1918 as the legitimate expression of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania.

First, it is shown that the Romanian army entered Bessarabia only on January 18, 1918, after the establishment of the local bodies of self-determination, and the coming was in response to the invitation of the *Sfatul Țării* of December 24, 1917. After the moment of the Romanian troops'

entry, all the power institutions have been maintained intact, with the initiative of constituting the *Sfatul Țării*. The Union's proposal was put on the agenda on 25 March 1918 and was subsequently discussed for three consecutive days. There were only 30 abstentions and only 3 votes against, and 87 council members voted for. The Romanian troops were not in the assembly. The Council of the Country was, in the view of Romania's diplomats, a body set up on the same basis as the Diets that formed in Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, where under the same conditions autonomous and then independent states have been recognized by the Soviet governments and all governments of Europe. The *Sfatul Țării* had the right to dispose of the fate of the province it represented. In the view of Romanian diplomacy, if the Soviet government resorts to the hint of the necessity of a Constituent, it should oppose its attitude to the Constituent of its own country (after the coming of power to the Bolsheviks, the constitutional elections as a result of the February 1918 revolution, have not occurred; see Figes, 2016 and Courtois, 2017). The November 27, 1918 vote of the *Sfatul Țării* was already considered an internal problem of Romania, since the Union Act of 27 March 1918 was already recognized. Romania also used the argument of the 1918 parliamentary elections: the elected representatives of Bessarabia in the Romanian Parliament on the occasion of the 1919, 1920, 1922 elections did not question the Union's act of March 27, 1918. The Council's decision is the manifestation of the clear will of the Bessarabia population to unite with Romania. The conclusion was that "only by a definitely qualified act of self-determination and by its incontestable right, Bessarabia returned freely to Romania."

Regarding the issue invoked by the USSR concerning the absence of a referendum, the Romanian side argued in the following way. The lack of a referendum was systematically invoked by the USSR, but the Soviet Union governments did not use the referendum as a means of resolving political difficulties. Not by the referendum the power of the Soviets was established, and not by the referendum, "the Soviet government imposed the fate of the populations of the old Russian Empire and those who were later embedded in the Union." Moreover, the representatives of Romania, even Trotsky, argued in his work *The fundamental problems of the revolution of 1923* argued about Georgia:

The proposal to remove Soviet armies from Georgia and to hold a referendum, under the control of

mixed commissions composed of socialists and communists, is an inferior imperialist trap under the democratic flag and national self-determination.

The Romanian delegation stated that it is legitimate to ask the Soviet part to hold a referendum on the self-determination of ethnic Romanians who live "east of the Dniester" but will not do so. The organization of a referendum in Bessarabia at that time (1924) was considered to generate a flagrant contradiction between Romania and its allies, since a Peace Treaty that recognized the Union of Bessarabia was signed. Negotiations ended with the Soviet government declaring not to recognize the 1920 Paris Peace Treaty.

The Romanian-Soviet negotiations were resumed in Riga in January 1932 with a view to concluding a non-aggression pact, but the Soviet delegation refused to sign such a pact in which the Bessarabia dispute was not mentioned and refused to give a precise definition of the territory over which aggression could take place.

The issue of recognizing the Union of Bessarabia with Romania by the USSR was to be solved in part by signing by the two states of the Convention on the Definitions of Aggression on July 4, 1933, to which also being part Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and then Finland. It is specified that the territory over which the aggression of a state cannot take place is the territory in which the signatory states signed the Convention. Thus, the USSR did not formally recognize the union of Bessarabia with Romania but acknowledged that it had renounced Bessarabia, both on the road of force (by renouncing aggression) and peacefully. The proof of this last part of the conclusion is the statement of Soviet Foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania Nicolae Titulescu:

*I know that in principle signing this Convention we gave you Bessarabia. If I cannot recognize this officially, it is because of the difficulties I would have with my public opinion ... But when I commit myself never to make an aggression on Bessarabia and that I cannot ask for the revision, not only because the USSR is not a member of the League of Nations, but because in principle we are against the revision, because it means war, how could I get Bessarabia back? (Geblescu, 2013:276)*

The signing of the 1933 Convention between Romania and the USSR determined the United States that had not signed the Paris Peace Treaty to change its attitude. State Secretary Cordell Hull set

out in a memorandum addressed to President Roosevelt how to reach the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania and proposed that from 1 July 1933 immigration quotas should refer only to Romania and avoid registering the name of Bessarabia for the Romanian citizens coming from this region. On the basis of the approval of this Memorandum, it can be said that the United States made a *de facto* recognition of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, even if from March 27, 1918 until the beginning of the Peace Conference in Paris, the Union of Bessarabia with Romania was not questioned, being even given as an example of the application of the principle of self-determination, this act was not finally recognized by all parties that participated in the negotiation of the Paris Peace Treaty. The agreement of France, Great Britain and Italy was possible due to a highly active diplomacy of Romania that did not hesitate to resort to extreme measures to recognize the Union of Bessarabia (keeping troops in Hungarian territory, abstaining from actions against Soviet Russia despite pressures even from the signers of the Peace Treaty).

It is important to underline that none of the states that have ratified, signed or ratified the Paris Treaty - Japan or the United States - did not explicitly refuse to recognize the Union of Bessarabia with Romania. This act was thus finally recognized by all states that participated in the Paris Peace Conference. The reservations expressed for signature / ratification were generated by the general positioning of these states towards the USSR. Recognition by the USSR was also *de facto*, following the signing of the 1933 Convention, or rather by interpreting the circumstances of this episode.

In any case, the absence of a fully valid *de jure* recognition by the international community cannot lead to the conclusion that the Union of Bessarabia with Romania did not comply with international law. As we have seen, Bessarabia has gone through

all the steps necessary for the decision of the *Sfatul Țării* of 27 March 1918 to be fully legitimate and to be considered the indisputable basis for the recognition of the Union of Bessarabia with Romania: Bessarabia proclaimed its autonomy to the Russian Empire - declared independence on January 24, 1918, and later decided without any external constraints on joining Romania. The principle of the self-determination of peoples, as expressed by the US President Woodrow Wilson, has been fully respected, like all the other principles of international law that were recognized at that time and are still functioning today.

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