

---

## A RESPONSE TO THE ARTICLE “AN ANALYSIS OF ROMANIA’S FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINE’S EUROPEAN INTEGRATION”

**Dan Bălănescu\***

Please allow me to refer, in this letter, to the article “*An Analysis of Romania’s Foreign Policy Relations in the Context of Ukraine’s European Integration*”, published in number 31/2014 of the Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review, under the signatures of Viktor Pavlenko, Deputy Director, Head of Defence Policy Division, Defence Policy and Strategic Planning Department, Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, Sergey Sveshnikov, PhD, Leading Research Fellow, National Defence University of Ukraine and Victor Bocharnikov, PhD, Chief Research Fellow, National Defence University of Ukraine.

I was unpleasantly surprised by the article, as it is full of false and defamatory allegations regarding Romania and based on speculations that portray an image of my country that is deeply contrary to reality.

According to the standards of the journal, published academic articles, including the one mentioned above, should include well founded arguments and have sound conclusions, while complying with the requirements of scholarly works.

Although it is stipulated that the views expressed in the articles are solely those of the authors, it is understood that no article can be published without observing the above-mentioned general rules. Accordingly, the article “*An Analysis of Romania’s Foreign Policy Relations in the Context of Ukraine’s European Integration*” should have fulfilled a set of clear conditions. I argue that the article does not fulfil the respective academic requirements and should not have been accepted for publishing in its current form.

I would like to start by quoting the final conclusion of the article: “From Ukraine’s point of view, the most serious problem is the possibility of territorial claims from Romania”. It is needless to argue on the absurdity of such a statement. The logical deduction is that, if the conclusion drawn by the authors of the article

---

\* **Dan Bălănescu** – Ambassador of Romania to Lithuania and Latvia.

borders on the ridiculous, their analyses and arguments cannot be much more different.

I will also quote other allegations contained in the article, which blatantly conflict with objective reality. First and foremost the authors try to argue that Romania has territorial claims in relation with Ukraine, which Romania tried to satisfy by supporting Ukraine's division. The authors do not exclude the possibility of a Romanian military attack against Ukraine, a solution which, in their opinion, Bucharest would hesitate to resort to for fear of the military support Russia could extend to Ukraine and of a possible negative reaction of the European Union and the opposition of Ukraine itself. To affirm, now, that Romania could think of a military attack against Ukraine, whose territorial integrity would be defended by Russia in such a scenario, is absolutely inconceivable in the current regional context.

Romania was one of the first states that recognized Ukraine's independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, bilateral diplomatic relations being established on 1 February 1992. By the Treaty on good-neighbourly relations and cooperation between Ukraine and Romania (June 2, 1997) and the Treaty on the Ukrainian-Romanian state border, Romania expressly recognized Ukraine's current borders, which excludes any territorial claims. The situation of the Ukrainian minority in Romania and of the Romanian minority of Ukraine is mentioned in the Treaty on good-neighbourly relations and is monitored by the two states, without affecting in any way their territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Despite these facts, the authors of the article claim that the attention Bucharest gives to the protection of the rights of persons belonging to the Romanian minority in Ukraine is a proof of its territorial claims, although its behaviour is in line with European standards.

I must underline that, on the contrary, Romania is a promoter of the respect for rights of persons belonging to national minorities as a matter of principle, to be applied according to standards everywhere, including on its own territory.

The article contains even more false allegations which I quote below:

– “Because of disagreements with other members of the EU, Romania is not fully satisfied with its own membership of the EU.” Apart from the fallacy, this deduction lacks any logic.

– “Romania showed no interest in Ukraine's accession to the EU”. As it is well known, Romania is the first EU member state that ratified the Association Agreement with Ukraine, on July 3<sup>rd</sup> 2014.

– “Denial of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact makes it necessary to revise the borders that are established according to this Pact, which would lead to the transfer of North Bukovina and South Bessarabia to Romania”. It is a speculation devoid of any grounds.

By what is known from its positions adopted in the context of Crimea's illegal annexation by the Russian Federation and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, Romania is one of the most vocal, firm and constant supporters of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. This reality contradicts completely the authors' conclusion that Bucharest would support Ukraine's division in order to annex parts of its territory. As a matter of fact, during his visit to Kiev on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014, Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta expressed once again Romania's firm support for Ukraine's territorial integrity, as well as for its democratic and pro-European path. He announced the intention to be even more active in supporting projects developed for Ukraine, including visa liberalization. During that visit, Prime Minister Ponta signed with Mr. Arseniy Yatseniuk, the Prime-Minister of Ukraine the bilateral Agreement on Local Border Traffic Regime, which will have concrete benefits for around 2 million citizens on both sides of the border. As well, the two Prime-Ministers discussed the implementation and observance by both countries of the European standards on the protection of persons belonging to national minorities.

Hoping that the publication of the article was an unfortunate error and that your readers will take note of the arguments presented in this letter.