

ROMANIA AND SECURITY CHALLENGES AT THE LIMITS OF THE
EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC AREA. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND
DIPLOMATIC ACTION

Bogdan Aurescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Ms. and Mrs. Heads of Missions,
Esteemed guests, Dear colleagues,

When I took over my mandate, at the end of November 2014, in my first public statement I argued that my appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs – of which I was and am extremely honoured - is first and foremost “*a reason for supplementary responsibility, preoccupation and hard work for Romania’s foreign policy*”.

Today, on the advent of the 2015 Romanian Diplomacy Days, I cannot but reaffirm this fact. And I confess that, in actuality, every day spent working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the past 19 years as a career diplomat, like most of you, was and still is an occasion for assuming supplementary responsibility, preoccupation and hard work for Romania’s foreign policy. I hope that this feeling is shared by all Heads of Diplomatic and Consular Missions of Romania, and, to a wider extent, by all our colleagues on duty in the HQ of the MFA or in diplomatic and consular missions.

In the same context, in outlining the primary directions of my mandate, I stated that “*the security situation in the region – and I am hereby talking about our Eastern vicinity – is a complicated one, which has the potential to affect the interests of Romania if we do not manage it in a proper fashion, together with our EU and NATO partners*”. At that time, I was referring to the situation in the Republic of Moldova, which was within a few days from parliamentary elections, to the grave security situation in Ukraine, to the importance of applying decisions pertaining to reassurance and adaptation measures established by the NATO Summit held in Great Britain, particularly concerning the presence of NATO Command and Control structure in the Eastern flank, including Romania.

Today, more than ever, I notice that these themes are of acute actuality – alongside others, of course – for the Romanian foreign policy. That is why, the theme of this Reunion of Romanian Diplomacy concerns ‘*Romania and security challenges at the limits of the European and Euro-Atlantic area. Risks, opportunities and diplomatic action*’. Thus, I propose that on the basis of a step-by-step analysis of last year’s evolving situations, to project future courses of action. I will not sidestep aspects concerning resources, financial or human, or institutional reform, as all of these are an integral part of a modern, dynamic and efficient diplomacy.

[Where are we?]

The year 2014 brought, indeed, a number of challenges from a geostrategic point of view in the wider vicinity of Romania, as an EU and NATO member state, especially in the East, in the strategic region of the Black Sea. In 2015 we noticed a continuation – in some cases with increased amplification and sophistication – of these challenges, complemented by new threats emerging from the South. We cannot ignore the fact that around the two organizations that we are part of [EU and NATO – n.ed.], a veritable corridor of instability has been created, with a high number of hotspots – from the Russian Federation’s aggression in the Ukraine, to a shift in the security equilibrium in the Black Sea region by the illegal occupation and militarization of Crimea, in the East, to a rise in terrorist activity, an ascending challenge posed by illegal immigration, various crises and state instability, in the South. And Romania – located at the Eastern border of these organizations and at an inflexion point with the Southern vicinity through the Wider Black Sea Region, has both the duty and the responsibility to provide substantial aid in the effort of projecting stability, democracy and prosperity. We have this duty and responsibility not only because for us, as a nation, but also for the community of values to which we belong. Further, these challenges have produced difficult moments not only at the level of NATO, but most of all at the level of the EU, to which we may also add our own challenges: from the internal reverberations of the southern instability, through illegal immigration and terrorism, to the resurgence of extremist groups, displaying a xenophobic and anti-European speech, on the continent – to the effects of the Eastern crisis, the on-going efforts to find solutions to the persistence of a heterogeneous economic climate, in which the situation in Greece is a particularly relevant example.

The structure of the current Romanian Diplomacy Reunion responds to these challenges. The main plenary sessions of the reunion benefit from the prestigious attendance of four Foreign Ministers – the Slovakian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Miroslav Lajcak – a premiere in a Romanian Diplomacy Reunion – to the session on *European problems and current challenges on the EU agenda*; the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Grzegorz Schetyna will participate in the session on *Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy and the essential role of the Eastern Partnership*; the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Borge Brende, will participate in the session on *Security problems and the adaptation of collective defence within NATO in the current regional security context*; and, last but not least, the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Nasser Judeh, will participate in the session on *Challenges and opportunities in the Southern Vicinity*. I especially thank all these colleagues of mine, who promptly replied to my invitation of attending this annual event of the Romanian diplomacy and I do not exaggerate when calling them true friends of Romania. Their gesture eloquently captures the importance which they attribute (and give recognition) to Romanian diplomacy, in the current international landscape.

I used the term “limit” in the title of this reunion. It is a provocative term from a number of perspectives. This “limit” – or ‘limes’ reflects, beyond its potentially pejorative sense, a wide range of challenges and opportunities, in equal measure. Firstly, it reflects a geopolitical reality – we are, in the Wider Black Sea Region, the

external frontier of the NATO and the EU. It is – I repeat – a region of multiple challenges, where Romania has undoubtedly strategic interests – security, economic, human interests, connected to the Romanians based here. It is a region that throughout the millennia, including in our most recent history, has been at the confluence of divergent geostrategic interests between the East and the West and the influences of the South, a confluence which modelled our history, sometimes for the better and many times for the worse. But it is the first time in our history as a “border” when we are within the community of values to which we have always belonged from a cultural and axiological standpoint. We are on *the good, safe side of the limes*. And Romania has the immense advantage of knowing and understanding this space – from the area of Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus, to the Central Asian region and the Middle East. We have an exceptional vocation of a “bridge” towards this world, which is familiar to us, which we understand and which looks on us with sympathy and friendship. We have, consequently, the duty and the responsibility, for us, as a nation, and for the community of values we belong, to use this vocation as a limes - “bridge” to project stability, democracy, prosperity. We need to overcome the limes – limit; and overcome our own limitations.

[What have we done?]

Ladies and gentleman,

In 2014 we viewed attempts to change the rules of the “geostrategic game” in the wider neighbourhood of Romania, and 2015 was important for calibrating the reaction of each international actor. The Romanian diplomacy had not only the role to respond to challenges, but to also be proactive and dynamic, so that it could better protect Romanian interests. These evolutions generated in-depth analyses and rigorous re-evaluations, an adjustment in the strategic vision of Romanian diplomacy and proposals for **solutions, concepts and new instruments** we are working on at present, in order to be as efficient as possible in realising the objective to ensure the safety of the Romanian state, in a wide sense. All these solutions converge towards the same purpose – to make Romania safer, in a complex period, in a complicated international environment, especially in our vicinity.

Our strategic purpose has been and is, on a permanent basis, to use all our diplomatic energies to focus attention to, through all available channels, and to determine a correct understanding by our partners of the critical evolutions in our neighbourhood, as well as to construct new instruments, on a number of dimensions – from *hard to soft* security – to ensure that Romanians are safe.

Before proceeding with the presentation of my activities in the past year, I wish to remind you that foreign policy is first of all a construction effort, which requires scrupulousness, vision and daily constant, concentrated, and sustained effort, in which results are not immediately obtained; which requires an attentive construction, endeavour by endeavour, step by step, concept by concept – precisely in order to obtain a durable result. I am telling you this, Heads of Missions, but through you I am telling this to all diplomats – diplomacy requires monthly and sometimes yearly efforts in the pursuit of a project or a high-scale plan which, when achieved, can bring durable

benefits for the country. This is the reason why I am asking you to get involved in this effort, which is perhaps less spectacular but rather a day-by-day effort to be displayed on a long term basis, in order to complete projects and plans which are essential to Romania. To state it otherwise, do your duty!

Concretely, all of our diplomatic efforts within the past year have been constituted into a “network” of convergent initiatives and proposals conceived and promoted through diplomatic action.

At the EU level, amongst the most important Romanian initiatives were those connected to the revision of the EU Security Strategy and of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

More precisely, for the first of these instruments, Romania offered concrete proposals regarding a balanced concentration on both Eastern and Southern EU Neighbourhoods; a more efficient engagement in the missions of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP); a better EU-NATO coordination; and a focus on aspects related to energy and cyber-security.

For the second instrument, we proposed, amongst others, the idea of creating a platform for dialogue on themes of security, understood in a wide sense, dedicated to partner states, which we termed *Security Trusts*. These formats have as objectives a recovery of trust and the incentivizing of cooperation with neighbour states and the “neighbours of our neighbours”, as well as the involvement of other actors which are interested in the stability of the aforementioned regions. Building trust, in a EU equation – neighbours – the neighbours of our neighbours, with the participation of some global “sponsors” can be obtained through such informal platforms; they do not include a military dimension and are multidimensional formats of discussion between the previously mentioned actors, for an increase in mutual understanding, a stimulation of dialogue, which would lead to an increase in trust and, as a further effect, to solving conflicts from the vicinities of the EU. Various actors involved in these platforms will be able to identify and agree upon concrete projects to improve regional problems in fields such as transportation, infrastructure, commerce, energy, assistance for development, cross-border cooperation – by multiplying the sources of finance for these projects. In opposition to the growing instability lurking at the borders of the EU, we need to build an area of trust and security around the ENP partners, within a contiguous space – from the Atlantic Ocean, to the south via Northern Africa and the Middle East and towards the Eastern vicinity. Romania proposed three such platforms: for the Black Sea region and the Caucasus; the Gulf area and the Middle East; and Sub-Saharan Africa. As an important dimension of the ENP, we used the opportunity of the Riga Summit to defend a revised and more visionary Eastern Partnership.

Also at the EU level, I proposed in a common initiative with Germany and Bulgaria to revise the *Black Sea Synergy* – which Romania actively promoted during this period and which we intend to revitalise. It is, if you want, a form of making the concept of *Security Trusts* more concrete in the Black Sea region, as the synergy offers the advantage of increased openness to the ensemble of Black Sea adjacent states and includes EU members, members of the Eastern Partnership, “neighbours of neighbours”. The Synergy can therefore contribute to a development and an increase

in the efficiency of cooperation in the Black Sea region and between it and the EU. This is why we will encourage an approach which involves all relevant platforms which are tied, in some way, to the Black Sea region, by building connections between the Synergy, the Eastern Partnership, the EU strategy for the Danube region, the Maritime Security Strategy and the EU Strategy for Central Asia, offering the possibility of playing a more important role in the region to the EU.

Romania also had an active involvement in elaborating the concept of an *EU Energy Union*. We especially pursued the promotion of projects that adequately represent Romania's interests – these being either the BRUA interconnector, the Vertical Corridor or AGRI (whose feasibility study is positive), energy interconnections (and I especially mention here the Romania – Moldova interconnector, since energy security is an instrument that cannot be neglected in the Moldavian process of EU integration) or the exploitation of resources in the continental shelf of the Black Sea.

At the NATO level, we concretely supported, by way of diplomatic action, the implementation of decisions taken during the 2014 Black Sea Summit held in the UK, regarding reassurance and adaptation measures as stipulated in the *Action Plan for enhancing the operational capacity of NATO* – with concrete effects through the creation of two NATO command and control structures. But we also proposed – in my intervention to the reunion of NATO foreign ministers in May, in Antalya – *two major conceptual reorientations* of the Alliance: first, the necessity to construct a *strategic reflection of NATO on the security of the Black Sea region* and, secondly, *the necessity to elaborate a “two-arm” integrated NATO strategy for the Southern and Eastern vicinities*, as this is required for outlining a Strategy of approach to the Alliance's partners, which would make use of the numerous instruments that NATO already deploys in its relations with these states, especially through the program which seeks to consolidate defence capacities. This latter Romanian initiative already enjoys Allied support.

We were actively involved in supporting Montenegro and Georgia in the NATO accession process: we organized, at my initiative, a common visit in July with my fellow colleagues from Poland, Croatia and Hungary in Montenegro and we started to organize documentation visits concerning NATO themes by Georgian experts to Bucharest.

We also consolidated the *formats for bilateral and trilateral consultation*, proposing new formulas that make Romania's regional positions more efficient. We started, following an agreement with my fellow colleagues in December of 2014, *mechanisms of strategic dialogue with Germany and France*, we agreed to lift the strategic dialogue mechanism between Romania and Poland to the level of foreign minister and, respectively, the trilateral strategic dialogue format between *Romania, Poland and Turkey*. Another consultation format which we will create at the level of foreign minister in the upcoming period is *Romania-Poland-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova*.

Another initiative of the Romanian diplomacy – on a long-term basis – in creating an *International Court for Combating Terrorism*, destined to prevent and sanction this amplifying phenomenon, by an efficient use of the instruments of international law. It is an initiative which we launched at the Council on Foreign Affairs in February and on which we worked together with the Spanish foreign minister, supported by Dutch

MFA experts and which we jointly promote – as you are aware from the instructions received – through Romanian-Spanish efforts to UN member states, especially to the members of the Security Council and states in the Southern vicinity – since it is an initiative that responds to a challenge stemming from this region.

On a different note, we managed to impose a particular dynamic, through the intensification of political-diplomatic dialogue, a proof of which is the long line of consultation held with my colleagues – 9 visits to other capitals and 10 other visits to Bucharest, over 20 meetings with colleagues in a multilateral framework. We particularly emphasized the **consolidation of strategic relations and partnerships** with Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Poland, Turkey, the Netherlands, through frequent bilateral contacts – visits to Bucharest (our British, German, Italian, Turkish, Dutch colleagues) and to the capital cities of our partners (to Paris, London, Warsaw). They illustrate the importance of these relations to both parties and the relevant place which Romania occupies in the priorities of these states, including in the fields of economy, security and European affairs.

Another important direction was the **development of relations with neighbour states**, with which Romania has a strategic relation – with Bulgaria and a Strategic Partnership – with Hungary. The visit of my Bulgarian colleague to Bucharest, which occurred in February, and the meeting which took place during the third joint governmental session, in Craiova, during April, already set forth a very rich agenda. Concerning Hungary, my visit to Budapest in May was a message of openness to the Hungarian party – we proposed a number of solutions for various complicated dossiers on our agenda. There are certain progress on the economic side (from a level of exchanges of over 7.3 billion euros, to the inauguration of the A1-M43 highway or the interconnection of the cross-border optical fibre network). Romania has always and unwaveringly acted on the basis of our political engagement for consolidating the bilateral relation in the parameters which are clearly defined by the political-legal foundations of this relation – the Basic political treaty of 1996 and the 2002 Declaration of Strategic Partnership.

Our relation with the Republic of Moldova kept on being, in the year 2015 when we celebrate 5 years of Strategic Partnership for the European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, a major priority, in virtue of the main vector for security assurance, stability and prosperity in the East. In spite of the complex political situation in Chisinau, taking place earlier this year, Romania continuously supported the reform process of Moldova and its closeness to the EU. We organized in March, together with my French colleague, the 10th Reunion of the Group for European Action of the Republic of Moldova, with the highest number of European ministers in attendance (22). On another dimension, I am especially happy that our proposal to allow Moldavian citizens in Romania without a passport has been successful and today, all European citizens including and especially Romanians, can cross the Prut River with just their ID cards. It is an important accomplishment of the Romanian diplomacy, for which I thank the President of the Moldovan Parliament, dl. Căndu, with whom I first approached this subject on the occasion of his visit on the 25th of March, but also to all Kishinev institutions that supported this project.

In the meantime, I am also happy that the messages which we have constantly

conveyed to Chisinău political factors, including on the occasion of my June visit, right before the second round of local elections – which advocated having a stable government, with the support of clear pro-European governmental coalition – were clearly understood. Today we have this government in Chisinău, the first step for a comeback of the Republic of Moldova in the frontlines of the Eastern Partnership in terms of performance in the pro-European reform process, for solving the serious economic problems that preoccupy Moldavian citizens.

Regarding the relationship with Ukraine, we worked together for the recovery of a functional relation, which we desire, of a real partnership. Romania was – and still is – a sincere supporter of the territorial integrity of our neighbouring state and of its proximity – truly, through consistent reform efforts – to the EU and NATO. We were the first state ratifying the Association Agreement, we are the leading nation for the NATO fund for cyber-security in Ukraine. The February visit of minister Klimkin was also very important. I maintained a direct and frequent contact with my colleague, with concrete effects: the secretaries of the joint Committee on national minorities already met in Kiev in order to set up the reunion of all co-presidents and of the Committee by the end of this year. The small-scale traffic agreement entered into force on the 14th of May, and yesterday the first permits for small-scale traffic were handed out. We are working together for a solution to the long-lasting disagreement on the Bîstroe canal. I assure you that we will continue this enterprise.

Concerning our Strategic Partnership with the United States, we continued to extend and develop the Strategic Partnership – two meetings with Secretary of State Kerry, in December 2014, at the NATO and OSCE ministerial reunions, with Ms. Nuland, Deputy-Assistant for the Secretary of State, in January, with the Assistant to the Secretary of State, Frank Rose in March. Especially in the context of celebrating 135 years of diplomatic relations, we continued to support the efforts to operationalize the Missile Defence facilities in Deveselu until the end of the year, to work together in the specialized group from the bilateral *Task Force* for applying the *Declaration of Strategic Partnership for the 21st Century* in order to make progress in reaching the objective set forth as a condition to enter the Visa Waiver program, we continued to work towards an extension of the economic dimension and towards the development of the educational dimension, as well as research and innovation.

Finally, we started a complex project which seeks to internationally promote the intercultural model successfully developed by our country and recognised as such at an European level in regards to inter-ethnic relations, in the context of celebrating 20 years from the adoption and ratification of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of Peoples belonging to National Minorities* of the Council of Europe. Romania has managed within the past 20 years to generate a genuine model in concern to inter-ethnic relations. A model which presupposes and active involvement on all levels, national and local, of national minority representatives in taking decisions concerning not only the minority in question, but society as a whole. It presupposes not only the mere co-existence of minorities with the majority, i.e. a multicultural model, but also an interaction between the minority and majority cultures, namely a superior, intercultural project. It is a project which enhances the Romanian society and the civic Romanian nation as a whole through the means of cultural diversity

and which demonstrates the virtues of interaction and engagement in the face of any so-called isolationist, autonomous or segregationist model. We are expecting that countries which host Romanian communities will also adopt similar measures, in order to protect the ethnical, cultural, religious and linguistic identities of the members of these communities. We considered that it is important to diplomatically promote this model. That is why we organised three conferences (in Cluj, Timisoara and Bucharest), which we will continue in the fall, an enterprise which is to be complemented by a synthetic volume, in both Romanian and English, which will be presented to you at the thematic session on this topic within the 3rd of September reunion and which you will use in your enterprises.

All these complementary initiatives have the purpose to realise the national interest of Romania, from the perspective of foreign policy, meaning an enhancement and consolidation of our country's profile, together with *ensuring our security in the widest possible sense – not only militarily, but also economically, energetically, socially and culturally.*

These initiatives show that Romania, by means of the regional positioning and the roles assumed, is increasingly become a more active actor on the international stage. The MFA, through its diplomatic activity, therefore has a more important contribution in outlining, defining, consolidating and applying new adaptation policies, both at a European level, a NATO level and beyond. It is a *substantive conceptual effort, transposed into diplomatic action.* Thus, Romanian diplomacy is gaining maturity at the level of the structures to which we belong and we are no longer a state which aligns itself to the positions of others, but we put forward ideas and initiatives, contributing to *the creation of a security belt, in a wide sense, which would counter and replace the present instability belt.*

[What should we do?]

Ladies and gentleman,

What we need to do in the diplomatic year which lies ahead naturally follows from all of the above. We need to project stability, democracy and prosperity in our vicinity.

At the EU level, the effort of Romanian diplomacy needs to be focused on finding and applying durable solutions to challenges facing the European project, so that the EU demonstrates, politically and institutionally, that its force and attractiveness can overcome the adversities of this complicated context. The imperative of obtaining positive results imposes a spirit of compromise, unitary and solidary action and an authentic attachment to the European values and principles.

We want a strong and stable Union, based on a complete respect for fundamental liberties, which would offer predictability and durable answers to current challenges; a Union capable of generating social stability, security and prosperity. The objective of the Union and of each of its member states must be, more than ever: closeness to European citizens, regaining their trust in the success of the European project, since without gaining this trust success cannot be attained. European citizens must once again be able to see themselves as the beneficiaries of European policies. We need to counter in a firmer manner radicalisation and extremism, which risk making anti-Europeanism a genuine political current. European action must maintain its coherence;

continue to unfold on the basis of the strategic pillars as defined by the Treaties, the EU Strategic Agenda, and the political orientations agreed upon at European level.

We need to actively revise the EU Security Strategy, which will be called, as you know, *The Global Foreign Policy and Security Strategy*, in which the Romanian contribution already presented will be included. Romania needs to continue its involvement in the *CSDP missions and operations*, with an important role in consolidating regional and international security. We are situated in the frontline in concern to civilian missions in the CSDP, on the 5th place (tied with Italy) on secondary personnel and on the 1st place at contractual personnel.

We need to continue to be involved in revising the *European Neighbourhood Policy*, with an active promotion of the concepts proposed by Romania, especially the concept of Security Trusts.

In an equal measure, in the context of this revision exercise, we need to work, together with our strategic partners, especially Poland, for injecting a new vision and endowing the *Eastern Partnership* with new instruments, so that this project which is essential to the efficiency of the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and consequently for the relation between the states in the European Partnership with the EU, to maintain and even enhance their relevance beyond the objectives set forth in the Riga Summit. The main target must be an accounting of the European perspective of those EP states that wish this, establishing instruments in the support of European style reforms and finding the best ways to develop EU's relation with other EP states, through approaches tailored to their necessities and objectives.

We need to concretize the objective launched with Germany and Bulgaria to *revise the Black Sea Synergy*.

Furthermore, we need to continue the efforts to promote our national objectives in constructing the *EU Energetic Union*.

The Romanian diplomacy will also pursue the establishment of the *Plan concerning European investments to stimulate growth and occupation*, the proposals to consolidate the *Economic and Monetary Union*, the *Digital Market Union* project, elaborating a new *Internal Security Strategy of the EU* which aims to respond to the challenges raised by terrorism.

Immigration is the most sensitive dossier on the European agenda at the present time. Beyond its implications on the humanitarian dimensions, on EU policies, on the management of the Schengen Area, and, ultimately, on the way in which we understand European solidarity, we must be involved in finding urgent and appropriate solutions to treat the problem at its source, in the countries of origin. The approach must be coordinated and unitary, as unilateral national solutions are inefficient.

Finally, the effort which we are already undertaking to prepare the *Romanian Presidency of the EU Council* in the second semester of 2019 will take priority. We already elaborated a first concept, which was approved by the Romanian government in July. In applying this concept we obtained a supplementation of the MFA scheme, through a change of the Governmental Decision concerning the organisation and functioning of the Ministry, so we can establish a service that will contain 10 positions in the MFA HQ, dedicated to initiating the preparatory measures for the 2019 Romanian Presidency of the EU. The swift operationalization of this structure, which will handle

the application of the governmental approved concept will take priority, will take priority. In the same time, we initiated a restructuring of the Permanent Mission of Romania to the EU, in order to adequately address the required preparations for 2019. We will initiate preliminary consultations with Austria and Finland, the states with which we will form the trio exercising the rotating Presidency between January 2019 and June 2020.

At a NATO level, the priority of our diplomatic action will be to adequately prepare the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw. Towards this purpose, we will continue to act for the application of the *Action Plan to increase the operational capacity of the Alliance*, meaning that we will give our full attention to the measures of reassurance and adaptation. For the preparation of the Warsaw Summit an important place will be taken by the November Bucharest Summit, which will be attended by the states in the Eastern flank of the Alliance, and for the preparation of which we will ensure all the necessary help. We desire that the Warsaw Summit will continue the NATO adaptation to the new context which is primarily generated by the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, Romania will diplomatically act so that the NATO structures in Romania are operationally consolidated – the NATO Unit for the Integration of Forces, which was recently visited by the Secretary-General of the Alliance and which in fact is, tomorrow, the 3rd of September, formally inaugurated, will have to become fully operational by the 2016 Summit, and the Multinational Divisional Commandment for the South-East will have to become initially operational in the same time horizon.

Also at the level of NATO, Romanian diplomacy will act so as the *Missile Defence facilities at Deveselu*, operationalized by the end of the year, to be integrated in the NATO Missile Defence System, so that we can declare the initial capacity of this allied system at the Poland Summit.

Another priority will be to develop the proposals which were submitted in Antalya, during May, concerning the realization of a strategic reflection of NATO over the Black Sea region security, on which we are already working together with a number of allies, and the elaboration of the “two-arm” integrated NATO strategy, towards the East and the South, including the Western Balkans.

These initiatives will need to be completed with the objective that we set forth during the December 2014 foreign ministerial, to elaborate a *strategy for the NATO-Russia relations*. The Alliance needs such a strategy, since Russia is not behaving as a NATO partner, but rather it is developing an evident hostility towards the Allies, the Alliance and its policies.

We will be involved in supporting the efforts to counter the hybrid war, by encouraging *cooperation between the EU and NATO*, which is also beneficial in other areas, such as strategic communication, the efficiency of which we will support. The potential of the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO must be more thoroughly explored; therefore we will vocally support an increase in cooperation between the two organizations. We will also argue in favour of including counter-terrorism on the agenda of next year’s Summit.

We will not forget about *supporting the expansion policy*. I believe, especially following the visit of the four allied foreign ministers, organized in July, that Montenegro fully deserves a positive decision concerning the invitation to access to

NATO. I believe Georgia is warranted in receiving a clear recognition of the high degree of preparedness – basically Georgia is acting as a *de facto* member of NATO. We will, consequently, work on reaching an adequate solution so that Georgia makes progress in its attempt to become a NATO member.

Generally, the Romanian Diplomacy will act, including (but not limited) at the OSCE level (for instance, by exercising, in the period 2015-2016 the position of President of the OSCE Security Committee), for countering any attempts to unilaterally and abusively redefine the European security architecture or the redrawing of the fundamental principles of international law on which it is based, with the purpose of serving narrow interests. The fact that an actor violates this architecture and principles must not lead to the hasty conclusion that they are no longer valid or that they must be change, especially in order to adjust them to illegal conduct, but they must generate measures to fortify international public order defence systems, including sanctioning mechanisms which must be firmer and prompter.

This is why, we will continue to support maintaining the sanctioning regime established by the EU concerning the situation in the Ukraine, as long as the Minsk Agreement decided last February are not fully applied.

We will further consolidate the *strategic dialogue mechanisms with Germany and France*, we will act for the realization, by the end of this year, of ministerial level reunions of foreign and defence ministers in the Strategic dialogue with Poland, and at the level of foreign minister in the Romania-Poland-Turkey trilateral and we will also work to realise the first reunion at the level of foreign ministers between *Romania-Poland-Ukraine-Republic of Moldova* and the first *Romania-Republic of Moldova-Ukraine* trilateral.

Concerning the Southern vicinity, you will continue to promote, together with our Spanish partners, the concept of an *International Court for Counter-terrorism*, through a widening of the spectrum of states which we will approach, by explaining the aspects under discussion, engaging high profile international NGOs which are interested in the topic and by using the framework provided by the proximal session of the UNGA. I invite you to closely follow debates in the plenary panel of the 3rd of September, which are dedicated to this topic, which the General-Director for Legal Affairs in the Spanish MFA will also attend, as well as the regional coordinator for Europe and the prestigious NGO the Coalition for an International Criminal Court.

We will continue to positively respond to efforts directed towards the support **of democracy and democratic transition in our Southern vicinity** as well as in our Eastern one. We will use funds from the Official Development Assistance to share lessons learned by Romania in the transition to democracy. I ask the diplomatic missions in the Middle East and Northern Africa to take advantage of project opportunities concerning this, for instance, in the field of elections, of the political party regime, of combating discrimination, or of integrity.

We will continue to develop the **Strategic Partnership with the USA**. We will pursue an intensification of the political dialogue, including the high-level one, with representatives from the Administration and the Congress, but also at a sectorial level, to adequately reflect the amplitude of relations, the multitude of fields of cooperation which we share. We will further consolidate and strive towards a more dynamic bilateral *Task Force* for the application of the *Common Declaration of Strategic Partnership for the 21st*

Century. We will also organize a new reunion by the end of this year. We will pursue a more active presence of Romania in the American think tank environment, through the organization of events in Washington that underline the strategic importance which Romania has for the United States.

The politico-military dimension will be given priority, as usual, pursuing a diversification and an enhancement of American military presence in Romania, a materialization of projects within the European Reassurance Initiative of the USA, an expansion of cooperation in the field of cyber-security and the operationalization of the Deveselu facilities. The economic dimension, including the energy component, will be pursued with priority: a more dynamic calendar of the Working Group on economic and energy problems within the Task Force, consolidating cooperation with the Council of Romanian-American Affairs, including through the organization of a new mission in the fall, in Bucharest, promoting success stories of American investors in Romania and we will also take advantage of the cooperation relations with American investor associations and with AmCham.

Also, we will continue our activity in the Working Group on consular problems, including the visa issue, so we can further promote, at the level of the US Congress, Romania's accession to the Visa Waiver program. Generally, we will promote more visits of Congress representatives to Romania. Another objective which we will be working on is to stimulate cooperation in the fields of education, innovation and research of the Strategic Partnership.

Concerning the relation with the Republic of Moldova, we will continue to support projects aiming to physically connect Moldova to the European space through Romania: the Iasi-Ungheni-Kishinev gas pipe, the electric lines, bridges, institutional construction projects or projects targeting social impact, such as the expansion of SMURD throughout the length of the Republic of Moldova, in the field of health, kindergartens, culture and of forming elites through the means of study scholarships. This message was clearly reiterated during the visit of the Romanian Prime-Minister to Kishinev, right on the Independence Day of the Republic of Moldova. It is a lengthy effort, which requires a significant mobilization of resources by Romania, and which will provide results on a long-term basis – to the benefit of the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. At the EU level, we will organize a new reunion of the Group of friends for the European Action of the Republic of Moldova. At a NATO level, we will act for the rapid concretization of assistance for the enhancement of the defence capacity of the Republic of Moldova, including by providing Romanian expertise, for the establishment of the NATO Liaison Office of Kishinev, for the continuation of the project the Volunteer Fund for the destruction of pesticides, where Romania is a leader-nation. And we will support efforts to solve the Transnistria dossier.

Concerning the Russian Federation, the main features of the bilateral relation should be predictability and pragmatism. We desire a relation in which the legitimate interests of Romania are respected, as well as the legitimate interests – and I underline legitimate – of Russia are to be respected. But the level of interaction with the Russian state will directly depend on its constructive involvement in solving the Ukrainian conflict and in redrawing the strategic balance in the Eastern vicinity. And respecting international agreements is an absolutely necessary condition for intensifying the

dialogue.

Concerning regional cooperation, during this semester we will exercise the **Presidency of OCEMN**. We will strive to advance in the implementation of the OCEMN Economic Agenda, contributing to the economic development of member states through promoting regional inter-connectivity, especially in regard to the transportation network, in spheres such as countering organised crime, tax evasion, the environment, energy and through the optimal utilization of already existing EU policies in the region. Lastly, we will pursue a transparent and constructive dialogue in the organization and, furthermore, a stronger interaction between the EU and the OCEMN.

Also, a more active and visible involvement of Romanian diplomacy in the Western Balkans is required. I ask the Heads of Missions from this area for proposals in order to intensify contacts and assistance projects from Romania in the process of joining the EU and NATO which these states are undertaking. The expansion of the EU and NATO is the only way, through the profound reforms demanded by the accession process, to ensure durable stability and prosperity for this region which holds strategic importance for Romania. Also, we will act for the organization of new reunions of trilaterals with *Bulgaria and Serbia, and with Bulgaria and Greece*.

The same involvement is required in Central Asia, an area of strategic interest for Romania, where we need to be more active, especially concerning the economic and energetic fields. We will contribute, including with new ideas, to the process of applying the *Revised EU Strategy for Central Asia*. We will support the stimulation of a more tightly-knit and more profound association of the interests of Central Asian states. Central Asia has the very high potential to become, in the next 10 years one of the main platforms of interaction between important global actors. The rising economic involvement of China, Russia's efforts directed at regional economic coagulation, the Afghanistan situation, the economic revival of Iran – all lead to the conclusion that an intensification of regional cooperation in Central Asia is warranted. Concretely, the institution of a regional cooperation format, multidimensional and, importantly, based on “regional ownership”, but also on the financial sustainment of major interested state actors and international financial institutions, can decisively contribute to an amelioration in regional heterogeneity and, subsequently, to the development of the region and an increase in the interaction with the EU, including Romania.

I ask for a permanent involvement of missions and specialized directions in the MFA to make progress concerning the *Black Sea – Caspian Sea Merchandise Transportation Corridor*, with its natural extension towards Central Asian states.

The Middle East and Northern Africa, in spite of existing challenges, remains a reservoir-area for creative energies and economic opportunities, where Romania must return through diplomatic action and construction in political and economic bilateral relations. We recently appointed a Special Representative for the Middle East and Northern Africa, who will handle the re-launch of commercial and investment relations with states in the region and will promote the initiatives, objectives and politico-diplomatic interests of Romania in relation with these states. We will act for the consolidation of strategic reports with Israel, we will intensify relations with Arab states in the region. We will carefully and actively pursue opportunities which

solving the Iranian nuclear file opens in the economic dimension.

The pragmatic development of relations with Asian states remains, once again, a requirement of our foreign policy. The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most important motors for growth of the global economy. You have, consequently, the permanent task to pursue the economic exploitation, in Romania's favour, of the immense potential represented by the Asian region for international trade, attracting investments, through engaging in substantive dialogues with regionally significant actors and with emerging states in the region.

It is necessary to consolidate, on the economic dimension, the ample friendship and cooperation partnership with China. You will actively pursue the consolidation of the strategic partnership with South Korea, an improvement in the partnership with Japan and the application of the Declaration for an Extended Partnership with India.

The main coordinates of our diplomatic action in Latin America remain the promotion of a more dynamic bilateral dialogue with states in the region, a more active promotion of economic cooperation, in order to counteract the slightly decreasing tendency of the volume of bilateral commercial exchanges within the past two years (after a rise in the 2009-2013 period).

This year we are celebrating 60 years since Romania became a UN member. It is the right time for a substantive reflection on the role of Romania in the UN. We have to be actively involved in the implementation process for the Post-2015 Development Agenda, but also in the negotiations which will take place at the Meeting of Parties to the Convention on Climate Change, scheduled to take place in December of 2015.

Another permanent assignment of diplomatic missions and of the respective department in the MFA will be the campaign to elect Romania as a non-permanent member of the Security Council for a mandate starting in 2020. We will also support a more substantive involvement in the missions to maintain peace, in which Romania has notable experience. We will act for a better valuation of the international centres of strategic importance, which we host – the **Centre for Emergency Transit for Refugees** in Timisoara, the first Centre of this kind in the world, or the Centre of Excellency for Protection and Security, in Bucharest.

The diplomatic missions of Romania will continue to promote the intercultural model developed by our country in the field of inter-ethnic relations – a model which can be replicated, with positive effects, on a regional level. We will resume the enterprise to organise a new reunion, after almost 10 years, of the Mixt Committee concerning national minorities with Ukraine, before the end of the year, as me and my fellow colleague agreed in February. In the relation with Hungary, we will insist on ending delays in finalising the Protocol of the Special Committee concerning national minorities, which we started to negotiate ever since 2011 and which my fellow colleague has agreed to finalise, in May, during our visit to Budapest. I am convinced that any involvement in favour of kin minorities must be consensual, according to the standards set by the European debate triggered in 2001 and finalised in 2003 concerning the Law for Hungarians in neighbouring states to Hungary. Any unilateral approach is counterproductive and contrary to these standards.

As you all know, Romania will assume the **Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)** in 2016. It is an important step, which

will underline the strong commitment made by Romania in recognizing its past, commemorating Holocaust victims, the fight against antisemitism and xenophobia, and is in the same time a recognition of the efforts that Romanian authorities undertook in this respect. The priorities of our Presidency are focused on an involvement of the media in combating antisemitism and the commemoration of the Holocaust, consolidating Holocaust education in member states and third parties, promoting academic research in this field. It is a very important foreign policy objective for Romania and I am relying on your support in the activities of the Romanian presidency to support the values of democracy, toleration, non-discrimination, dialogue and mutual respect in the European space.

We need to continue, also, to be a politico-diplomatic facilitator for stimulating economic cooperation. Economic consolidation, based on the measures adopted in the past years and which is predicted to continue conveys to our partners trust in Romania's economy – a serious argument to position ourselves as a stability and predictability pole in a difficult neighbourhood context. In this context we will attentively pursue the recent economic-financial evolutions in Asia, the decrease in the price of oil, in order to evaluate the possible consequences of these facts on the global economic landscape, including on the economic growth levels of the primary actors and our main partners.

The economic diplomacy enterprises must seek to promote the comparative advantages held by Romania in commercial operations and in the process of attracting investments, to consolidate our relation with the OCDE and acceding to this organization, the support of specific Romanian interests in the negotiation process which engages the EU and the US, Canada, Japan and other states concerning free trade agreements.

We will continue the dialogue with the business community, including on the basis of the new protocol with the Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which we signed in March. I ask all Heads of missions to personally become involved in this effort to promote the economic interests of Romania, which falls not only under the purview of economic advisors appointed by the Ministry of Economy. The performance in signalling business and investment opportunities, as well as the elaboration of analysis concerning impactful economic phenomena and events will be an important factor in evaluating missions and all diplomats.

Romanians everywhere remain a constant in our foreign policy efforts, which must respond to the concerns and the signals from communities abroad.

This is way, a more efficient **consular service** for Romanian citizens has been a priority in the first half of this year. We began with the inauguration of the Centre for the Contact and Support of Romanian citizens abroad, which from January handled a total number of nearly 670.000 telephone calls and 70.000 e-mails, with the system being improved on a constant basis.

Also, we launched the “Dialogue with the Diaspora” project. We had eight reunions of the leadership of the Consular Department with representatives from the Romanian community and Romanian mass-media in European states (in February: Italy and Spain; in April: France and Germany; in May the UK and Austria; in July: Belgium and Greece). It is the first time when the MAE HQ, the diplomatic and consular missions and Romanians which are abroad meet for a direct and open

dialogue, in order to communicate on the efforts to improve consular services and for the unmediated takeover of all problems with which citizens are confronted. We will periodically organise such reunions.

Also, in order to more efficiently respond to the requirements of Romanians who are currently living abroad we initiated the opening of new consular offices, taking into consideration especially the signals provided by the Romanian communities. We obtained financial resources and an increase in personnel during this year in order to open the Solovitno Consular Office, which is absolutely necessary to properly apply the Small Traffic Agreement with Ukraine and the General Consulates in Bari, Manchester and Stuttgart. We will continue with establishing new Consular Offices in Spain and the US. We will continue the practice of organizing itinerant Consular Offices in states with big Romanian communities.

The crises occurring in the Southern vicinity, especially, determined a rethinking of the proceedings and lines of action of the MFA from a consular perspective. From the moment when the Consular Crisis Centre appeared, or the “MFA Crisis Cell”, this structure proved, convincingly, its necessity, by managing very complicated consular situations, which sometimes determined field interventions and major risks. I here remind you of the operations to evacuate Romanian citizens from conflict areas in 2015: Yemen (March-May) – 73 persons; Libya – 7 persons; Syria – 14 persons.

Also, in the context of the multiplication of crisis situations I wish to mention the *Inter-institutional crisis cell*, in which the MFA is acting together with other institutions (SIE, SRI, MApN, MAI) which acts on a permanent basis, when it is required. It solved the situation of 2 Romanian citizens kidnapped by a criminal organisation in Nigeria, and, at the present time it is managing the case of the Romanian citizen abducted in Burkina Faso.

We will continue the process to make consular activity more efficient, as a priority line of action in the MFA, for the direct support and to the direct benefit of Romanian citizens.

Still in concern to the relation with Romanians abroad, we had another important objective, which was to utilize the diplomatic potential and energy of remarkable youths abroad. In February, we agreed on a formal cooperation framework with the League of Romanian Students Abroad (LSRS) and the CAESAR Foundation (Centre for Access to Student Expertise and Romanian Graduates), seeking to cooperate in projects dedicated to foreign policy priorities. We will continue to efficiently work together, and it is also an assignment of yours, as diplomatic missions, with the LSRS. And we also intend to take Romanian students with foreign academic backgrounds in internships at the MFA HQ and in external missions.

Finally, it will of priority for you, as Heads of Missions – but it is an obligation for all of the ministerial personnel – to timely and adequately prepare the parliamentary elections for the Diaspora, conforming to the attributions which the MFA has in this area. Preparations of the MFA efforts to ensure an efficient application of the law on parliamentary elections starts now – on the 4th of September where you will attend a plenary session with the participation of the President of the Permanent Electoral Authority, dedicated to this theme, with the adequate valuation of the lessons learned in the last electoral period. Of course, we will follow the evolutions of the normative

framework, which can be relevant for the MFA obligations connected to the vote in the Diaspora. We support the introduction of the best ways – including voting by correspondence, for which the Ministry already sent observations and proposals to the Specialized Committee in Parliament – so that all Romanian citizens abroad can vote, under conditions of vote safety.

Dear colleagues,

I do not wish to conclude before referring to the internal reform of the Ministry, a priority field of action, especially for me, as a minister. There are multiple files on work where the situation needs to be improved – and it is important for you to know them, since you are the direct beneficiaries of these efforts. If the activity undertaken by you and the MFA becomes more efficient, then Romanian citizens, for which we are permanently working, will see that their interests are better protected.

From a budgetary point of view, as the Prime-minister conveyed, the recent rectification brought with it a surplus of resources. We obtained nearly 30 million more than in the initial allocation proposal.

These resources will allow us – we took special attention to remedy this major deficiency – to finalize the medical insurance for personnel outside the European space, a project which we will continue next year as well. It is unthinkable to work in spaces that endanger your health, and sometimes even your life, without a minimal required protection for diplomats and other categories of personnel.

Also, this surplus gives us the possibility to launch a project announced in December 2014, to rehabilitate some historical embassy buildings, which are a property of the Romanian state and which, I am sure you will agree, has direct relevance for the image of our country. We will begin with some priority works, considering what can be spent by the end of the year, but we will move forward as we obtain new funds. There are 107 buildings in Romania's property abroad, a lot of which are in the national patrimony of the respective countries, or even in the UNESCO patrimony, and which need to look exactly how we want our image to be presented abroad. The allocated funds allow us to launch and renew the auto park of missions, which is also a necessity at the level of image for the missions.

Furthermore, we obtained a supplementation of the personnel scheme. I am talking about 10 positions in the HQ and 85 in the foreign service. Aside from initiating the preparations for the Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2019 and the opening of consular offices, which were already mentioned, the supplementation also provides us the opportunity to open the new Romanian embassy to Estonia and to improve the quality and quantity of the informational flow with the HQ and ensure a better protection for missions which are in dangerous areas.

We made progresses and we will continue to make progresses, in accordance with the legal framework, in the project for a new MFA headquarters. We finalized the pre-feasibility study stage and we are in the feasibility study stage. We obtained, for the next steps, at the budgetary rectification, the required engagement credits. The new headquarter is absolutely necessary in order to have, in 2019, a functional Presidency of the Council of the EU. Lastly, the prestige of Romanian diplomacy is at stake, as an essential institution of the Romanian state.

But perhaps the most important project that we launched is the one concerning personnel career management. As you know, we launched, for the first time, a transparent procedure, with a multi-layered consultation of the entire personnel, which led to the adoption of a revised methodology concerning sending diplomatic and consular personnel to positions abroad, a revised methodology concerning diplomatic rank advancement and we adopted, for the first time in the MFA's history a methodology for the re-insertion of personnel coming from abroad into the MFA HQ. We will continue with modernizing the procedures regarding employment competitions in the Ministry. And, also, I want to mention that we are reusing, after 6 years, the procedure for the promotion on executive positions specific to the MFA, which will be finalized in the first half of October. Lastly, I want to salute the recent entry into force of the law concerning the MFA personnel pensions, a parliamentary enterprise which I actively defended and for the success of which I thank everyone supporting it.

Finally, we will revise the class ranking of diplomatic missions, seeing as how the first such exercise taken in 2012 was not applied in the activities of the MFA. It is a complex project, which needs to take account of a number of factors (such as the importance of the relation of the respective country and Romania, the existence and the dimension of a Romanian community, the level of commercial and investment exchanges, the national and regional security environment, difficult climate or endangering factors etc.). It is essential to the adequate calibration of personnel and financial resources allocated to missions and it will, also, have effects in the field of personnel career management.

I assure you that I will continue the efforts directed towards internal reform and I am counting on your support, as members of the diplomatic and consular body, so we are more efficient in the service of our citizens.

The field of public diplomacy is also targeted by innovative elements. We are seeking to initiate a multi-annual project, built around the Centenary of the First World War and the Centenary of the First Union and the making of Modern Romania. I will soon appoint a special representative for this objective, at the level of the MFA. I invite diplomatic and consular missions as well as cultural institutes to creatively contribute to the implementation of this ambitious and necessary project.

We also initiated a new program of public diplomacy this year – Dialoguri@MAE, a series of open, interactive events, featuring topics of current foreign policy, in which proposals, actions and conceptual approaches of the MFA are presented. We organized 4 editions until the present time. I invite you to contribute with topics and other subject proposals which fit into the objectives and format of this new project. Also, as you know, we are once again, after 5 years, conducting reunions of the MFA Consultative Council.

The MFA has also entered the era of digital diplomacy, as I wish to emphasize that we are the first ministry that elaborated, at the beginning of the year, a strategy – “The MFA Strategy for a Digital Diplomacy”, for the period 2015-2020, in applying the Digital Agenda of the EU and the Romanian Digital Agenda. According to the strategy, information and communication technology represents a strategic field, with an impact on the added value and productivity, supporting, with modern services and instruments, our foreign policy priorities.

Esteemed colleagues and guests,

I began this speech by reminding you of what I said during the receipt of my mandate. I will close in a similar fashion, with your permission. On the 25th of November 2014 I underlined that *“the Romanian diplomacy is a fundamental institution of the Romanian state, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the essential tool which has the duty to apply the foreign policy of Romania and to primarily contribute, to the widest extent, in reaching foreign policy goals and satisfying Romanian interests on an international scale. Consequently, this institution cannot be weak, but powerful, since it is up to it to realize the national interests of Romania. And it needs to remain in this position, especially in the extremely complicated security context in our immediate vicinity. Diplomacy is an institution that must be capable of working tirelessly, day and night, for these goals. ...I have faith in my diplomatic and consular colleagues, who are, to the greatest extent, professionals and upright. I support them and encourage them to remain like this.”*

I consider that these words are as valid today as they were then. We have a lot to do, in a complicated international context, and this effort will impose a full, sincere, professional and complete commitment by each of you. Consequently, I ask of you to do your duty, so we can finalize these projects which are essential for the objectives and national interest of Romania.

Thank you!