

# The bandwagoning tradition in the Romanian strategic history

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## Abstract:

The present essay represents a review on the history of bandwagoning behaviour for the case of Romania as a small power. The time span of the study stretches from 1878, since Romania gained independence up until the transition from the 1990s, after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. I base my arguments on the International Relations literature on bandwagoning, by combining arguments from the neorealist perspective, as well as the neoclassical realist branch. Then, I elaborate on five moments of bandwagoning, from 1878 to the 1990s.

**Keywords:** alliances, bandwagoning, Romania, small power

## I. INTRODUCTION

Given the capabilities and geographical position, in its history, as a small power, Romania had to make its way among the interests of the neighbouring great powers. Since independence, obtained in 1878, Romania has a strategic history marked by bandwagoning. The aim of this essay<sup>2</sup> is to offer an outline of the Romanian strategic behaviour, with regard to its alliance options, since 1878 to the present, from the viewpoint of alliance theory, more exactly starting from the concept of bandwagoning, in the understanding of both Stephen Walt and Randall Schewller<sup>3</sup>. The attempts of balancing, which are few in the Romanian strategic history, are not under the scope of this paper.

In the context of Romania, I argue that this discussion is necessary in present times, as the international system faces geopolitical turmoil, since there are two ongoing wars in Ukraine and Iran and the United States under Trump administration seeks to determine a change in the trans-Atlantic relation, by shifting its attention from Europe to Asia<sup>4</sup>. By taking action in both EU and national rearming efforts, Europe rearms itself and takes steps toward strategic autonomy, while the American ally is no longer as reliable as in the past and is less willing to provide for the global public goods it once guaranteed. In this context, I consider that, in such a historical context, a discussion from the Romanian perspective is needed, especially that a new National Security Strategy was adopted

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<sup>3</sup> The subject regarding the Romanian alliance behaviour in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is addressed largely in Preda 2024. See also Miroiu 2005, Cioculescu 2016, Gorun 2021. For a historical account, see Torrey 1999, Topor 2017, 2020, Grandhomme 2018, Dinu 2024

<sup>4</sup> The White House 2025

by the president Nicușor Dan<sup>5</sup>, where it was advanced the concept of *solidaristic independence*. In this respect, I argue that revisiting the history of Romanian bandwagoning orientations can be useful.

Therefore, the remainder of this article is organized in the following manner. The next section is devoted to a review of the concept of bandwagoning. The III-VII sections are reserved for an analysis devoted to the history of bandwagoning regarding the foreign policy orientations and decisions of the Romanian political elites since independence. The last section is reserved for conclusions.

## II. BANDWAGONING IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

In the International Relations literature on alliances<sup>6</sup>, bandwagoning was analyzed in relation to the opposite behaviour, namely balancing. As Kenneth Waltz, a neorealist author, put it, “[b]andwagoning and balancing behavior are in sharp contrast”, where the first model means joining the stronger side, while the second requires an alliance with the weaker side to form a balance<sup>7</sup>. Elaborating on structural arguments as Waltz, John J. Mearsheimer argued that “[w]ith balancing, a great power assumes direct responsibility for preventing an aggressor from upsetting the balance of power”, with “[t]he initial goal [...] to deter the aggressor”<sup>8</sup>. To deter the aggressor, besides sending confrontational diplomatic signals and mobilizing additional resources, a balancer can form an alliance known as “external balancing”<sup>9</sup>.

As a strategy to avoid confrontation, “[b]andwagoning happens when a state joins forces with a more powerful opponent, conceding that its formidable new partner will gain a disproportionate share of the spoils they conquer together”, being labeled as “a strategy for the weak”<sup>10</sup>. In this instance, the balance of power becomes detrimental to the bandwagoner, working in the advantage of the stronger side. This strategy assumes that resistance is futile if a state is more weaker than its opponent, who can use its power to a more damaging punishment<sup>11</sup>.

For Stephen Walt, coming from the defensive neorealist branch, balancing and bandwagoning are two types of behaviour related to the decision to enter in an alliance, defined “as a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states”<sup>12</sup>, while other authors offered a definition as “formal associations of states for the use (or nonuse) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their own membership”<sup>13</sup>.

If the balancing behaviour - regarded by Walt as more common than bandwagoning - is defined “as allying with others against the prevailing threat” and

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<sup>5</sup> Administrația Prezidențială 2025

<sup>6</sup> For a review on alliances, see Miroiu & Soare 2006

<sup>7</sup> Waltz 1979, p. 126-128

<sup>8</sup> Mearsheimer 2001, p. 156

<sup>9</sup> Mearsheimer 2001, p. 156-157

<sup>10</sup> Mearsheimer 2001, p. 162-163

<sup>11</sup> Mearsheimer 2001, p. 163

<sup>12</sup> Walt 1987, p.1

<sup>13</sup> Snyder 1997, p. 4

is regarded as an option of alliance with the weaker side against the most powerful one, bandwagoning is regarded as “alignment with the source of danger”, which is alliance with the stronger side<sup>14</sup>.

In a later account, Walt defined bandwagoning as involving “*unequal exchange*; the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power and accepts a subordinate role. [...] Bandwagoning is an accommodation to pressure (either latent or manifest) [...] Most important of all, bandwagoning suggests a willingness to support or tolerate illegitimate actions by the dominant ally”<sup>15</sup>.

Walt proposed his own perspective, *balance of threats*, revising the *balance of power* theory of Waltz. Walt argued that power is not the sole cause for forming alliances, but stated that “states tend to ally with or against the foreign power that poses the greatest threat”, thus “balancing and bandwagoning are [...] viewed as a response to threats”<sup>16</sup>. Therefore, Walt identified four factors that influence the perception of threat, namely “aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions”<sup>17</sup>.

One author, coming from the neoclassical realist perspective, who contested the idea of bandwagoning as an alliance behaviour chosen only for security concerns is Randall Schweller. He argued that bandwagoning is more often adopted by states, not only for security concerns, but also for profit gains<sup>18</sup>. Schweller contested the claim of Walt that bandwagoning means surrender to the source of threat, in opposition to balancing which means - in the words of Walt - resistance to threats<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, Schweller advanced four forms of bandwagoning, “motivated by the prospects of making gains”<sup>20</sup> - *jackal bandwagoning*, *piling on*, *wave-of-the-future*, *the contagion* or *domino effect*, while *holding the balance* is related to balancing<sup>21</sup>.

Jackal bandwagoning is an opportunistic behaviour adopted by lesser revisionist states with profit - *i.e.* territorial gains - as the main aim, in alliance with an unlimited-aims revisionist power. Also, a secondary motivation can be security from lion powers<sup>22</sup>. The second model is piling on bandwagoning, which is present

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<sup>14</sup> Walt 1987, p. 17-21

<sup>15</sup> Walt 1991, p. 55

<sup>16</sup> Walt 1987, p. 21-22

<sup>17</sup> Walt 1987, p. 22

<sup>18</sup> See Schweller 1994

<sup>19</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 67-70

<sup>20</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 77

<sup>21</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 77-83

<sup>22</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 77. From the schwellerian perspective, a *lion state* is a great status quo power, interested in maintaining the existing international order. Continuing his classification, Schweller conceptualized other states as *owls and hawks* - tier two and middle powers devoted to status quo, but unable to defend by themselves; *ostriches* - (potential) great powers behaving as small ones; *doves* - status quo actors that might accommodate some non-violent demands of the revisionist states; *lambs* - small status quo powers prone to bandwagoning; *foxes* - cunning revisionist great powers with limited objectives; *jackals* - opportunistic limited-aims revisionists too weak to pursue

“when the outcome of a war has already been determined”, meaning joining the winner for unearned gains or motivated by fear of reprisals for joining the losing side. It is similar with jackal behaviour, but at the end of the war<sup>23</sup>.

Wave-of-the-future bandwagoning appears when states believe that the stronger side represents the future. It is adopted by charismatic leaders and is completed with vibrant ideologies reinforced by strong propaganda and battlefield superiority, inducing an impression of “going with the winner”<sup>24</sup>. The contagion or domino effect is similar with a spreading infection or a collapsing domino, with the following mechanism, well suited also for revolutions: “the bandwagon is set in motion by an external force, which touches off a chain reaction, fueling the bandwagon at ever-greater speeds”<sup>25</sup>.

The last model of behaviour, in contrast with the others, is holding the balance. In this case, a revisionist state can incite to conflict other actors for gain, thus being either a kingmaker or a balancer<sup>26</sup>.

As I have shown in this section, I operate with two general models of bandwagoning. The (defensive) neorealist branch views bandwagoning as a preservation strategy, which is a form of avoidance of conflict to preserve the current state of affairs. The neoclassical realist perspective goes further with the argument, affirming that bandwagoning occurs also for profit gains. After this short review of operating concepts for this paper, the next five sections are devoted to an analysis regarding the history of Romania’s alliances choices motivated by bandwagoning behaviour.

### **III. 1883 - ALLIANCE WITH THE TRIPLICE**

The Romanian political elites commenced the tradition of bandwagoning with a great power when they decided to ally with the Triple Alliance. In fact, the Romanian elites led by the king targeted an alliance with Germany, but they had to conclude a treaty with Austria-Hungary to which Berlin also joined<sup>27</sup>. After a war in alliance with Russia against the Ottoman Empire, Romania obtained its independence. Even though Romania proved itself as an useful ally, practically saving Russia on the battlefield, after the war Petersburg annexed three Romanian counties from southern Bessarabia in exchange for Dobrudja taken from the Ottoman Empire<sup>28</sup>.

As Russia represented a threat for Romania and given the historical record of Russian invasions or occupations of the Romanian Principalities, the alliance with a great power remained the only option for preserving the independence of the newly proclaimed Kingdom in 1881. After examining some other options with

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their objectives or not very dissatisfied with the status quo; and *wolves* - unlimited aims revisionist states with a revolutionary character. See Schweller 1998, pp. 84-89

<sup>23</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 78

<sup>24</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 79-80

<sup>25</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 81

<sup>26</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 82

<sup>27</sup> Dinu 2024, p. 80

<sup>28</sup> Pecican 2024, p. 174-178, Buşă 2003, p. 48-60

smaller or other great powers, Russia being regarded as an enemy, the elites from Bucharest decided to join the Triple Alliance formed in 1882 by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. Even though the German Chancellor treated Romania badly at the 1878 Berlin Congress, the Romanian elites sought an alliance with Germany given its military might and economic power<sup>29</sup>.

As one of the most industrialized countries in Europe after unification, the German Empire earned its place in Europe after three wars between 1864-1871, with Denmark, Austria and France<sup>30</sup>, the last two being great powers. The German military performance remained fresh in the mind of the Romanian elites, especially to King Charles I, who was raised and had military training in Prussia. Moreover, from the beginning of the alliance up until 1914, the decision-making group was mainly pro-German and russophobic in character<sup>31</sup>.

As “[t]he alliance with the Central Powers [...] formed the cornerstone of Rumania’s foreign policy for thirty years” and as the deciding factors from Bucharest “perceived the Central Powers to be the strongest military and economic force in Europe”<sup>32</sup>, the orientation towards the Triplice remained pinned until 1914. Moreover, this attitude of the Romanian elites was present despite some friction points, especially the enduring problem with Austria-Hungary regarding the Romanian population from the Kingdom of Hungary and the customs wars launched by the Dual Monarchy with Romania<sup>33</sup>. However, the fear of Russia, “the eternal adversary” was greater<sup>34</sup>.

Romania was a small power aiming to preserve the post-1878 status-quo. In the terms of Randall Schweller, it can be said that Romania was a lamb state that could have been a prey for a supposed predatory Russia. By allying with the Triple Alliance, Romania adopted a wave-of-the-future bandwagoning behaviour. The Romanian elites had in mind the bad experience with Russia after the War of Independence, but also the German victories in the wars of unification, where two other great powers were defeated by Prussia/Germany. Therefore, the criterion of military superiority of Germany is fulfilled to sustain the wave of the future option, as well as the economic argument, as the German Empire emerged as one of the most solid economies in Europe<sup>35</sup>.

In schwellerian terms, the Romanian leaders shared the vision of “going with the winner”<sup>36</sup>. Moreover, the Romanian prime-minister of that period, I. C. Brătianu<sup>37</sup>, along with King Charles I<sup>38</sup>, were such actors in the Romanian political

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<sup>29</sup> Hitchins 1994, p. 136-137

<sup>30</sup> Kennedy 1987, p. 182-191

<sup>31</sup> Dinu 2024, p. 39

<sup>32</sup> Hitchins 1994, p. 143

<sup>33</sup> See Căzan, Rădulescu-Zoner 1979, cap. V

<sup>34</sup> See Brătescu 2023, p. 213-229

<sup>35</sup> Kennedy 1987, p. 171, tables 9 & 10

<sup>36</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 80

<sup>37</sup> Regarding the personality of I. C. Brătianu, see Brătescu 2023, Dinu 2024, p. 32-33

<sup>38</sup> Regarding the influence of Charles I in the Romanian foreign decision process, see Dinu 2024, p. 32-35

system who enjoyed authority and respect. The ideological aspect is also fulfilled, as some of the Romanian political figures - mainly russophobic - favourable to an alliance with the Triplice were educated in Germany<sup>39</sup>, especially the king who came from Prussia and received a German education.

Since the Romanian public opinion was pro-French as well as a part of the political elite, the treaty with the Triple Alliance was kept secret by its artisans<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, the treaty was not backed with a massive propaganda campaign to the public.

#### **IV. 1916 - THE REORIENTATION TO THE ENTENTE**

After two years of neutrality, since the beginning of the First World War when Austria-Hungary attacked Serbia, Romania entered the war against its former allies from the Triple Alliance. Here is another moment of bandwagoning for Romania<sup>41</sup>. In this instance, for the argument of bandwagoning by Romania in 1916 there are some schwellerian models that can be taken into consideration.

First, there is the argument of Romania adopting a jackal bandwagoning strategy. In this instance, I agree with Miroiu and Soare that between 1878-1918 Romania was a moderated revisionist state, who claimed territories from Bulgaria, Russia and Austria-Hungary<sup>42</sup>. This claim can be inconsistent with the idea of Romania as a lamb state after 1878, seeking to preserve the status quo. However, Romania did not act overtly in a revisionist fashion during the period in question, especially that for the Romanian political-strategic factors the decision to enter in an alliance with the Central Powers was based on status quo calculations and served the objective to preserve the national integrity of the country.

From a schwellerian viewpoint, in 1916 Romania was a small state whose main war objective was profit - namely, obtaining Romanian inhabited territories from Austria-Hungary, a promise made by the Entente<sup>43</sup>. It was a limited-aims revisionist state. On the other hand, what is interesting for this case, as the jackal state typically bandwagon with an unlimited-aims revisionist power<sup>44</sup>, Romania adopted a jackal bandwagoning model with a status quo coalition, as the Entente members were lion states. For this instance, compared to the Central Powers, in the Romanian perception the more powerful coalition was the Entente<sup>45</sup>. In fact, given the promises of each coalition, as the Central Powers promised Bessarabia and a part from Bukhovina from Russia in case of joining them<sup>46</sup>, Romania was still in on

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<sup>39</sup> See Preda 2024, p. 142-144

<sup>40</sup> King Charles I, D. A. Sturdza, P. P. Carp, Al. Beldiman (the Romanian minister to Berlin between 1898-1916). Dinu 2024, p. 67

<sup>41</sup> The subject of Romanian reorientation in the context of the First World War was treated in a more extensive manner by the author in Preda 2024, p. 139-160. See also Miroiu 2005, Cioculescu 2016, Preda 2021, Gorun 2021

<sup>42</sup> Miroiu & Soare 2007, p. 153-154

<sup>43</sup> Convenția politică dintre România și Antantă (4/17 august 1916) 2001, p. 272-273

<sup>44</sup> Schweller 1998, p. 77

<sup>45</sup> Preda 2024, p. 154-155

<sup>46</sup> Topor 2017, p. 110-111

a jackal bandwagoning mode. But the prey promised by the Entente was larger, namely all the territories from the Dual Monarchy reaching Tisa river, more economically developed and populated than Bessarabia. On the other hand, since Romania sided in 1916 with the Entente, claiming Bessarabia was out of question as Russia was part of the alliance.

Second, there is the argument of wave-of-the-future bandwagoning, as the Romanian elites believed in the future promised by the Entente, victory and a new organizing principle of the international system, based on national states, while the decision to ally with the Entente was already taken in 1914 and only the moment to enter the war remained to be decided<sup>47</sup>. In this case, Romania had a charismatic leader, prime-minister I. I. C. Brătianu, who changed Romania's foreign orientation, as well as a favourable public opinion to the decision to enter the war on the Entente side<sup>48</sup>.

## **V. REORIENTATION TO GERMANY IN THE WAKE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

After the victory in the First World War Romania remained a faithful ally of the Western powers, Great Britain and especially France<sup>49</sup>. Romania was embedded in a project of Eastern anti-revisionist alliances backed by France, aimed to protect the new status quo after 1918, especially that Romania acquired large territories from Russia and Austria-Hungary. Up until the beginning of the Second World War, Romania was a status quo state, trying to preserve its independence and territorial integrity guaranteed by the Western great powers, especially France. Therefore, most of the interwar period, Romania adopted a balancing policy against revisionist tendencies from USSR, Hungary and Bulgaria.

As Germany grew stronger in the 1930s, while France weakened, the regional status quo that Romania tried to defend in the interwar period became increasingly fragile. The signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact on 23 August 1939 instilled fear to the Romanian leaders, as they thought that the two great powers have secretly delimited their spheres of influence and Romania was to be disadvantaged. Their fears became true as the Soviet Union sent to Romania two ultimatum notes in June 1940, demanding Bessarabia, just after the defeat of France, the guarantor of Romania<sup>50</sup>.

After this tragic event, Romania accelerated its course towards an alliance with Germany. To accommodate Germany, the King Charles II appointed a pro-German government (Gigurtu cabinet), then Romania signed an economic treaty aiming to link the Romanian economy to the German counterpart and finally, under Ion Antonescu, the new leader, Romania entered in an alliance with Germany and the other Axis powers. Moreover, Germany previously backed territorial losses for

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<sup>47</sup> Brătianu 1919 [2020], p. 40-41

<sup>48</sup> Torrey 2014, p. 55-56

<sup>49</sup> See Preda 2024, cap. 6

<sup>50</sup> For the impact of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact to Romania and the Soviet ultimatum notes, see Trașcă 2013, chap. I

Romania, N-W of Transylvania to Hungary and the Cadrilater to Bulgaria, as conditions to tighten the Romanian-German relations. If Bucharest would have not complied with the German demands, Germany could have occupied Romania<sup>51</sup>. Therefore, Germany would have turned into a threat for Romania.

As Romania initially tried to balance the Soviet threat perceived as existential, and Hungarian revisionism, with Germany as the guarantor<sup>52</sup>, finally had to bandwagon with Berlin. There are some aspects supporting the bandwagoning argument for the case of Romania. First, is the Waltian argument of an alliance with the source of threat, Germany. Second, there is the Schwellerian model, of bandwagoning for profit, as Romania, after the territorial losses, entered in an alliance with Germany to regain the lost territories<sup>53</sup>. Thus, Romania became the second contributing state after Germany to the campaign against the Soviet Union<sup>54</sup>, which helped Romania to regain Bessarabia, while hoping to retake Transylvania from Hungary in a post-war settlement managed by Germany<sup>55</sup>.

Romania turned from a prey as a lamb state into a jackal in alliance with a wolf (Germany) to regain the lost territories. There is also the argument of wave-of-the-future bandwagoning, as Antonescu believed in the German victory over England which would have transformed Germany in an European arbiter<sup>56</sup>. The orientation of Bucharest was also reinforced by the German battlefield superiority, as the previous blitzkrieg campaigns in Greece and Yugoslavia demonstrated, thus convincing the Romanian army that Germany was invincible<sup>57</sup>. Therefore, given the objectives of Romania and the strategic landscape, the Romanian decision to ally with Germany in 1940 was backed by a combination of jackal and wave-of-the-future bandwagoning.

## VI. 1944 - TURNING SIDES

Romania entered the war against the Soviet Union in alliance with Germany and fought deep into the Russian territory. After the defeat of Stalingrad, some tensions emerged in the Romanian-German relation. In few months Antonescu realized that the war with the Soviet Union was lost<sup>58</sup>. After some efforts to negotiate with the Allies<sup>59</sup>, the Soviet offensive that began on 20 August 1944 on the Romanian front precipitated the events. The situation was grave and as the Soviet forces threatened to break the main Romanian defensive line that would have decided the fate of Romania. Therefore, on 23 August 1944 King Michael arrested Antonescu,

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<sup>51</sup> Hillgruber 1994, p. 125-140, Haynes 2000, chap. 6, Harvard 2021, chap.3

<sup>52</sup> Trașcă 2018, p. 124-131

<sup>53</sup> In 1940, Germany remained the sole great power that promised Romania the lost territories from the same year. Harvard 2021, p. 87

<sup>54</sup> Copilaș 2023, p. 80

<sup>55</sup> Harvard 2021, p. 65

<sup>56</sup> Harvard 2021, p. 83

<sup>57</sup> Harvard 2021, p. 90

<sup>58</sup> Hitchins 1994, p. 487-488

<sup>59</sup> Hitchins 1994, p. 493-499

appointed a new government and announced that Romania changed sides with the Allies against the Axis, aiming to liberate Transylvania<sup>60</sup>.

There are some reasons to support the thesis of a Romanian bandwagoning to the Allies, especially the Soviet Union. First, in waltian terms, since the defeat of Stalingrad, the Soviet Union became more and more threatening for Romania, that could have led to its destruction. As the post-23 August events had shown, Romania faced occupation by the Soviet troops and later sovietization. Therefore, Romania bandwagoned with the source of threat, hoping to save the country and regain Transylvania. In schwellerian terms, there is a combination of wave-of-the-future and piling-on bandwagoning, as Romania changed the alliances knowing that the war in the East was lost, the war for the Axis was at the end and the future was with the Allies.

## VII. POST-1989 REORIENTATION TO THE WEST

In December 1989 the Communist regime in Romania, as in Eastern Europe, collapsed. The dictatorial couple, Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu, was removed from power and finally shot on 25 December 1989, while a new power structure emerged, stemming from the second ranks of the Communist Party. The National Salvation Front, led by Ion Iliescu, took power in Romania and proclaimed a democratic regime, separation of powers, respect for human rights, while on the realm of foreign policy assumed the former commitments, especially within the Warsaw Pact<sup>61</sup>. After a treaty signed between Romania and USSR in 1991, the collapse of the former Soviet ally in December that year, replaced by a weakened Russia, and some years of hesitations, staying in a grey zone, the Romanian leadership turned towards the West, meaning integration in NATO and the EU<sup>62</sup>.

In this case, the Romanian elites behaved according to the wave-of-the-future bandwagoning model. The system in which Romania was integrated almost half a century collapsed in 1989 and 1991 when the Soviet Union disappeared. Thus, the Communist political and economic system that competed capitalism and democracy was defeated and the West claimed victory over the East in the Cold War. Only one superpower remained, the United States, the leader of the West, where the Romanian aspirations converged. To this end, Romania made efforts to join NATO<sup>63</sup> and started the process to join the European Union<sup>64</sup>, two objectives achieved in 2004 and 2007. If NATO was aimed to offer security, the European Union was seen as a factor of economic development. As Teodor Meleșcanu - the Romanian Foreign Minister who submitted the accession application to the EU in 1995 - argued in 1999 that “Romania's accession to the European Union represents the safest, if not the only, path to the country's economic development, to ensuring democratic stability, and to definitively reconnecting to the system of European

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<sup>60</sup> Hitchens 1994, 499-500

<sup>61</sup> Comunicatul în zece puncte Consiliului F.S.N. (22 decembrie 1989) 2001, p. 397-398

<sup>62</sup> See, on this topic Cioculescu 2018.

<sup>63</sup> Cioculescu 2018, p. 348-351

<sup>64</sup> See Preda 2024, chap. 9.3

values to which Romania belongs”<sup>65</sup>. Also, it is worth to be mentioned the Snagov Declaration from 21 June 1995, signed by all Romanian political factors, that declared the Romania’s accession to the EU as a “national strategic objective”<sup>66</sup>. This is another argument supporting the wave-of-the-future bandwagoning perspective for Romania.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This essay represents a review of the bandwagoning behaviour for the case of Romania. As a small power, placed at the intersection of the geopolitical interests of the great powers, Romania has a history of bandwagoning, especially in important points of its history since gaining independence in 1878. Regardless of context, Romania had to bandwagon to advance its interests, either for the state survival objective, or for obtaining some war profits in alliance with a great power. Simply put, every alliance motivated by bandwagoning in the case of Romania involved a great power.

To illustrate my argument, I first presented a short review on bandwagoning with focus on neorealist and neoclassical realist perspectives. Then, in the next five sections, I have offered a review on the history of bandwagoning for Romania from 1878 to the 1990s, since obtaining independence to the fall of the Communist regime and post-Communist transition.

Indeed, Romania is currently a NATO ally. But, in the light of the recent events, the US new approach on the international affairs, the war in Ukraine and Iran, the events can turn against Romania. Therefore, I argue that the Romanian decision makers and strategic factors should take into consideration the history of bandwagoning with great powers for Romania, but not to follow this model. Instead, they need to try to change the bandwagoning model to a more assertive role on the international arena.

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<sup>65</sup> Meleşcanu 2000, p. 248

<sup>66</sup> Declarația de la Snagov 1995 [2000], p. 67

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