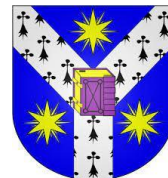




„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași



Faculty of History

PhD student:

Ionel Doctoru

Constantin Diamandi, Minister Plenipotentiary in the French capital (1924-1930)

Abstract

Scientific advisor:

PhD Univ. Prof. Lucian Leuștean

Date and place of presentation:

September 27, 2023, Iasi, Romania

Commission members:

SR qualification level I PhD Ottmar Trașcă, “George Barițiu” Institute of History of Cluj-Napoca.

SR qualification level II PhD Bogdan Schipor, “A. D. Xenopol” Institute of History of Iași.

PhD Associate Prof. Adrian Vițalaru, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași.

Keywords: Diamandi, Paris, Romania, France, diplomacy, Legation, Franco-Romanian Treaty, international relations, negotiations.

Constantin I. Diamandi was one of Romania's most important diplomats in the first part of the 20th century. His work spanned thirty-eight years and included the Great War and the border negotiations of Greater Romania, from minister plenipotentiary in Petrograd, to delegate

at the Paris Peace Conference and, last but not least, minister plenipotentiary in Paris from 1924-1930. A career diplomat, Diamandi was always a credible choice for the legations in the great European capitals.

The aim of this doctoral thesis is to develop a monograph on Constantin Diamandi's activity in Paris, a historical episode that has not been discussed, except for a fraction of it, in the works on Franco-Romanian relations after the Great War.

Following a debate that gave rise to passions among Romanian diplomats and aroused the interest of both political and public opinion, the appointment of Constantin Diamandi to the most important capital of Europe, Paris, had been made in order to materialize the Franco-Romanian treaty, an important element of a security concept conceived by Paris and wanted by Bucharest. By sending C. Diamandi to the French capital, Ionel Brătianu wanted to give an incisive tone to the negotiations for the treaty with the French side, which had not been satisfactory until then. Diamandi's diplomatic experience and relations in Paris, as well as better financing of the Legation, were to be the perfect recipe for better support of Romanian interests on the banks of the Seine at a time of change in French foreign policy.

In order to create an overall historical vision, our research led us to the archive documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the France, Paris, Romania, Petrograd and Constantin Diamandi collections, and documents from the National Archives, the Constantin Diamandi collection, the Royal House, the Ministry of National Propaganda and Microfilms France and last but not least the Europe-Romania collection from the Archives du Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, La Courneuve..

The AMAE archive files have provided us with a wide range of political and diplomatic information. Diamandi's reports, diplomatic correspondence, telegrams, instructions and internal notes have enabled us to observe how the diplomat perceived Paris policy and how this perception evolved throughout his career. To these we can add the reports sent by other members of the Paris Legation.

By studying the documents in the National Archives we have been able to identify telegrams, diplomatic and private correspondence, as well as some of the diplomat's memoirs. For each memorial frame, the diplomat had several variants. Studying each version revealed us how his sense of reality had changed over time. The research of microfilmed documents also provided us with valuable information from the French political environment about the work of Romanian diplomacy and, implicitly, Constantin Diamandi's actions. The French documents, studied in the Archives du Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires Étrangères, Paris, La Courneuve, completed the archival information taken from Bucharest.

In order to create as complete a historical picture as possible, we carried out an interdisciplinary study covering history, economics, consular law, propaganda, political science and sociology.

From the very first days of his mission in France, Diamandi would prepare the ground for his work. After careful consideration, the newly appointed envoy extraordinary renewed his contacts and made new connections in politics, diplomacy and cultural life on the banks of the Seine. The people concerned were visited according to their importance to the cause of his mission. The first people to be approached were members of the French diplomatic corps. Diamandi knew that French diplomacy, dominated, as in Romania, by large aristocratic families, had a powerful influence even in politics, and the Romanian minister had to use it.

The beginning of his mission was linked to the re-establishment of the Paris Press Office, a press service which was to provide him with all the propaganda tools he needed to implement a more effective and incisive diplomatic approach. The Media Office facilitated the Legation's propaganda response and created important connections with leading figures in the French press and politics. Although the Bureau's propaganda debut was marred by Bolshevik propaganda, gradually the Bureau's work became more effective and efficient.

The diplomat's efforts were extended to the whole of France by means of a system of consulates which was to meet the needs of the diplomatic mission and complement the work of the Legation. Diamandi's time in Paris overlapped with the most fruitful period in the history of Romanian consulates in France. The efforts of the Romanian Envoy Extraordinary, who considered it necessary for the French state to be linked to Romania by as many economic and consular connections as possible contributed to this.

The German proposal of the pact of guarantees created a rupture in French foreign policy priorities, forcing Diamandi to adapt. Added to this were new challenges that tested his skills and abilities and required a meticulous and complex approach. Diamandi's endeavours in the period that followed were aimed at forming new links in the Parisian political environment and maintaining and strengthening old connections. However, his work in Paris depended to a large extent on the directives sent from Bucharest and his relationship with the Romanian Foreign Minister. I. G. Duca, so that any communication barrier between the two made a negative impact.

The political instability on the banks of the Seine affected France, but at times it was perceived differently by Romanian diplomacy. The coming of Paul Painlevé in the government and of Aristide Briand at the head of the Foreign Ministry seemed to alter the fate of the

negotiations for the time being. The start of the official Franco-Romanian negotiations took place during the talks between the Great Powers for the signing of the Treaty of Guarantee. Both experienced diplomats and experts in negotiations, Constantin Diamandi and Philippe Berthelot, Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, the main "actors", "put their cards on the table" and negotiated bluntly. Diamandi's speech, his approach to the talks and the outcome of the negotiations were elements that later influenced his work in Paris and his relations with the authorities at the *Quai d'Orsay*.

In the Franco-Romanian negotiations, the Romanian diplomat shows creativity and political realism. The pressure he exerted on the *Quai d'Orsay* took place on several levels - media, political and, last but not least, epistolary. The extraordinary Romanian envoy masters the art of diplomacy. When he notices that his actions are causing tension, the diplomat relinquishes the initiative and waits to be called in for talks.

Constantin Diamandi's work in the context of Franco-Romanian negotiations was conditioned by the course of international politics. Each treaty or agreement signed between the Great Powers inexorably left its mark on the relationship the diplomat had built with the Parisian authorities. The proposal for a pact of guarantees, in the form of the Locarno Treaties, was the main element of instability. These agreements created shocks and constantly altered the conditions under which Franco-Romanian talks were conducted.

With the influence it exerted in the French political environment, the Locarno Pact changed the European context and brought about regional changes. France now had to reinforce this policy by integrating Germany into the League of Nations, so the interest in the agreement with Romania waned. The new political priority of the Parisian authorities postponed the treaty negotiations at a time when Romania could no longer count on any international support. In the new geopolitical framework, Romania remained isolated and its 'struggle' influenced the approach of the Romanian Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris. C. Diamandi, as envoy extraordinary in Europe's most important capital, had to find new ways of communicating and combating proposals from diplomats and allied political figures.

The one constant in Diamandi's mission to France was change. Permanent changes, both in French and international politics and in Bucharest, brought with them new challenges. With Alexandru Averescu coming to power, the discourse and approach of the Bucharest authorities towards Paris and Diamandi changed. These in turn led to a change in the diplomat's attitude towards the *Quai d'Orsay*. Supported from Bucharest, the diplomat turned more often to the media to create the necessary echo for his message to be heard on the banks of the Seine. The Averescu government also brought with it the last negotiations between Diamandi and Paris.

Now the decisive moment took place, when the diplomat succeeds in determining the signing of the pact and materialising the security wish of Greater Romania.

The signing of the treaty was for the diplomat the high point of his career. At the same time, this achievement was an image coup for Diamandi, as well as an important means of propaganda for the Romanian government. Although its value was only moral, the agreement with Paris strengthened the position of the Romanian state in Eastern Europe, and in relation to the Soviet Union. A status that was later complemented by the signing of the Italo-Romanian treaty.

After the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, the "natural" step in the evolution of Franco-Romanian relations was to be represented by the elevation of the rank of the Legation in Paris. Bucharest wanted an Embassy in France not only to increase the prestige of the state, but also to place the country on a similar footing with the other Great Powers. However, Averescu did not have the patience to develop a tactical approach to the negotiations, but only tried to take advantage of the improvement in Italian-Romanian relations to put pressure on the French. In this context, Diamandi's work in Paris continued along new lines dictated by the needs of the Romanian state and the changing international situation.

The stabilisation loan, eagerly sought by Vintilă Brătianu's government, brought Diamandi into an environment he had not mastered. The Romanian diplomat struggled to understand the financial issues blocking the negotiations. At the same time, he tried to support every political or diplomatic figure who advocated reducing the war debts of the Eastern European states. Involving the diplomacy of the Little Entente and Poland, Diamandi tried to create a front that would change the financial outlook of France and England. The Romanian envoy extraordinary's request achieved his goal, with Romania obtaining significant debt reductions.

The coming into power of Iuliu Maniu, and the 'open door' policy, changed the perception of French and financial policy towards Romania in a positive way. Under the impetus of this impression and facilitated by the successes of the Vintilă Brătianu government, Franco-Romanian negotiations continued along new lines.

The mediation of Franco-Italian relations was one of the high points of Diamandi's work in the French capital. The fruit of the relations that Diamandi had built up through his missions, this was intended to crown the whole diplomatic process in Paris. The vague and highly changeable wishes of Italian diplomacy, the constantly changing Italian-Romanian relations and French suspicions about Rome's goodwill have always created difficult obstacles for the diplomat to overcome.

In all of this, the relationship that the diplomat built with members of the Royal House was of real benefit to Diamandi, but it was also the main reason why he was later removed from the diplomatic service. At the height of European intrigue in Paris, the diplomat had to forge a relationship with the now self-exiled former Crown Prince in a different direction.

As the official representative of the Romanian government, Diamandi followed the very behaviour that the suggestions coming from the country required of him in relation to Charles. From the moment Carol entered the French capital, everything changed for Diamandi. The way the diplomat would deal with the Romanian authorities in Bucharest would be "spiced up" by the problem of the former prince. Increasingly involved in the royal crisis, and alongside Queen Mary, the diplomat lived the last moments of his career in turmoil. The Maniu government, newly invested, did not forget that Diamandi was one of Ionel Brătianu's trusted men. In this context, his activity followed the sinuous trend of relations between diplomat and government.

This doctoral thesis has not only presented Constantin Diamandi's actions in Paris, but has projected the actions of this plenipotentiary minister in a broader, and at times unknown, framework of Franco-Romanian relations between 1924 and 1930. The complexity and innovative nature of the research lies in the discussion of the diplomatic, political, consular and propaganda activities adapted to the domestic and international context and to the relations that the Romanian minister plenipotentiary had with Bucharest and Paris.