

ROMANIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE COMMUNIST PERIOD. NICOLAE CEAUȘESCU'S VISITS

Nicolae PĂUN, Ph.D. Professor
Professor J. Monnet Ad Personam
"Bogdan Vodă" University of Cluj-Napoca
nicolae.paun54@gmail.com

Ioana Maria RUS, Ph.D.
Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca
mariaioanarus931@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The official visit of President Nicolae Ceaușescu to Italy, held between May 21 and 26, 1973, represents a significant moment in the evolution of Romanian-Italian bilateral relations. During this visit, Ceaușescu met with Italian political leaders, including President Giovanni Leone and Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, as well as visited industrial centers in northern Italy. A key aspect of the visit was the signing of official documents, such as the Joint Solemn Declaration and the Agreement on Economic, Industrial, and Technical Cooperation, which opened new opportunities for future collaboration between the two states. The article provides a detailed analysis of the visit's program, focusing on meetings at various political levels, the impact of the signed bilateral agreements, and the coverage of the visit in the Italian press..

KEYWORDS: *bilateral relations, common solemn declaration, Italy, official visit, Romania*
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1. INTRODUCTION

The official visit of Romanian President Nicolae Ceaușescu to Italy in 1973 marked a significant milestone in Romanian-Italian bilateral relations. Highlighted by extensive engagements across political, economic, and cultural sectors, the visit underscored Romania's independent foreign policy within the Eastern Bloc and demonstrated mutual interests in strengthening cooperation. This article examines the detailed events of the visit, analyzes the reactions and perceptions of the Italian press, and assesses the broader international implications stemming from the diplomatic interactions and agreements achieved during Ceaușescu's time in Italy.

2. DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENTS AND BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS

The programme of the official visit to Italy covered the period of 21-26 May 1973. On 21 May, according to the official agenda of President Ceaușescu's visit, he was to be received by the Romanian ambassador in Rome at the Quirinale Palace, followed by a meeting with the Italian President, Giovanni Leone, and various subsequent activities including an official dinner and reception.

On 22 May, another meeting took place with the President of the Italian Republic, this time attended by Romanian and Italian ministers. After approximately two hours, a second round of discussions occurred at Villa Madama with the Italian Prime Minister, Giulio Andreotti. In the evening, after visiting Capitoline Hill, an official dinner was hosted by the Italian representative, Giovanni Leone.

On the following day, 23 May, a farewell ceremony was organised by the Italian President before President Ceaușescu departed for northern Italy to visit industrial centres. The first stop was in Genoa at the steel enterprise Italsider, followed by a dinner hosted at the Prefecture and concluding with a visit to the Ansaldo San Giorgio enterprise and cultural activities including a tour of the museum at Palazzo Bianco. The working visit continued the next day in Turin, where the president visited the Fiat-Mirafiori and Olivetti factories and later the Prefecture in Milan, where he stayed overnight to visit the Metalrex enterprise the following day (an unplanned visit not included in the official programme). On 25 May, the visit continued to San Marino, and on the final day of the journey in Italy, there was a meeting at the Vatican with Pope Paul VI (information related to these visits is not the subject of this study). Before returning to Romania, the president had lunch at the Romanian Embassy in Rome.

In addition to the previously mentioned visits, meetings took place on 22 May with the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Enrico Berlinguer, and with PCI representative Luigi Longo, and on 23 May with Socialist Party Secretary Francesco de Martino, though these were not listed in the official programme (ANIC, CC al PCR, file 4/1973, ff. 11-22).

President Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit was initiated following an invitation from Foreign Minister Aldo Moro to visit Italy, itself resulting from Moro's visit to Bucharest in 1971 (ANE, file 220/1971).

Discussions regarding Ceaușescu's visit to Italy began during the presidency of Giuseppe Saragat (Italian Socialist Party) in 1971 (Giovanni Leone, 1978). However, Italy's internal political situation and the context of the presidential elections delayed setting an exact date. The General Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Roberto Gaia, stated in a telegram sent to the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the president had ceased receiving visits from the end of 1970: "According to Italy's constitution and legislative practice, the so-called white semester follows, during which the Italian president no longer holds full powers, cannot dissolve Parliament, and cannot undertake valid political commitments" (ANE, file 2524, issue 220/1972 - 1973).

After prolonged discussions regarding the exact timing, the official visit to the Italian capital, Rome, began on 21 May 1973, with travel conducted aboard the presidential aircraft Tarom. According to the *Scântea* newspaper (issue no. 9516) dated 22 May 1973, President Nicolae Ceaușescu, accompanied by his wife Elena, was joined by Ioan Avram, Minister of Heavy Machinery Construction Industry, George Macovescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ion Pățan, Vice-President of the Council of Ministers, as well as experts and advisers.

On 21 May, President Nicolae Ceaușescu was received by the Romanian ambassador in Rome at the Quirinale Palace, followed by a significant discussion with Giovanni Leone, the President of the Italian Republic, at Leone's invitation. This meeting at the Quirinale Palace in Rome was attended by Orlandi Contucci, diplomatic adviser to the Italian President, and Constantin Mitea, adviser to the President of the State Council, lasting approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

The conversation between these two prominent political figures was very well received by Giovanni Leone and the Italian public, contributing positively to developing linguistic and cultural

ties between the two nations. President Leone asked Ceaușescu to express his views on Romanian-Italian relations and subsequently, the current state of international relations. Leone also expressed admiration for Ceaușescu's handling of state principles such as equality of rights and the rejection of aggression between nations.

Regarding bilateral Romanian-Italian relations, Nicolae Ceaușescu highlighted their good standing and recalled productive interactions with various Italian business representatives, including Giuseppe Medici, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mario Zagari, former Minister of Foreign Trade. Ceaușescu expressed optimism about discovering new avenues to enhance these relations (ANIC, file 70/1973, Conversation Note, f. 3).

Ceaușescu identified numerous potential initiatives beneficial to both nations, noting that his collaborators, Italian ministers, and business leaders would closely examine these opportunities. Although President Leone's constitutional powers limited direct involvement, he affirmed his commitment to supporting measures fostering stronger bilateral relations, a commitment warmly welcomed by Ceaușescu.

Subsequently, the discussion shifted towards global issues impacting European relations, with President Ceaușescu addressing the rapidly changing international environment. He emphasized the shift in public thinking, arguing that leaders must recognize that coercion no longer resolved issues, as societies increasingly rejected violent means.

Another global issue raised by Ceaușescu concerned agreements among major powers, advocating that these should consider the interests of smaller states. He mentioned the Vienna conference aimed at reducing military forces, expressing concern that decisions there might result in superficial reductions or mere redeployment of troops, potentially increasing tensions. Ceaușescu stressed the necessity for the Vienna conference to accommodate the interests of all participating nations, despite discussions primarily addressing Central European matters (ANIC, f. 7).

The conclusion of the discussion between the two heads of state revealed a request from President Giovanni Leone to President Ceaușescu, in which he asked for approval of certain marriage requests from Italian citizens submitted to the Romanian State Council. In response, President Nicolae Ceaușescu explained that many of these requests had indeed been approved; however, there were exceptions, particularly in cases where the young Romanian woman's parents had not given their consent.

On the second day of the Romanian head of state's visit, between 10:00 and 12:15, talks took place between Giovanni Leone and Nicolae Ceaușescu. Participants from the Italian side included Nicola Picella, Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Republic; Giuseppe Medici, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Roberto Gaja, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Federico Sensi, diplomatic advisor to the President of the Republic; Antonino Restivo, among others. From the Romanian side, attendees included George Macovescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ion Pățan, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Trade; advisors, and others. (ANIC, CC of PCR, file 71/1973, May 22, 1973, f. 1). Both countries affirmed their respect for the principle of non-interference and national sovereignty, integral parts of their Joint Solemn Declaration.

The conversation was initiated by President Giovanni Leone, who expressed appreciation for the vision demonstrated by President Nicolae Ceaușescu regarding Romania's foreign policy.

The floor was then given to the President of the State Council, Nicolae Ceaușescu, who was asked to present his viewpoints to the other members present. He recalled the Romanian-

Italian bilateral relationship during both favorable periods and those when regimes differed, emphasizing that the immediate post-World War II era had led to positive and progressive developments between the two states.

Additionally, Nicolae Ceaușescu stressed that the dichotomy marked by the two military blocs of the bipolar international system should disappear ("hoping we will reach a point when these military blocs must disappear, establishing relations that exclude force and the division of the world into military blocs" (ANIC, f. 3)). In response, the Italian President confirmed this vision.

Alongside appreciative remarks about developing interstate relations, several issues were addressed, including Romania's trade exchanges with Italy and the desire to expand relations not only with socialist countries but also capitalist nations with different social systems: "We have extensive relations with socialist countries—particularly neighboring ones, primarily the Soviet Union, as well as other socialist countries in Asia and Latin America. At the same time, we pay significant attention to developing relations with developed countries in Europe and worldwide, as well as developing nations" (ANIC, f.4-5).

Economic exchanges in 1973 exceeded 300 million dollars; however, the Romanian leader aimed to double this amount in the following five years through direct trade exchanges, targeting a volume of 1 billion dollars by 1980 (ANIC, f.5). Furthermore, Italy's support was requested for cooperative agreements between Romanian and Italian enterprises and for negotiations within the Common Market framework: "Romania is a developing country, and until this issue is resolved within the Common Market, we would like the Italian government to act according to this reality" (ANIC, f.6-7).

Moreover, a request was made to regulate duties and taxes on products exported to Italy or imported into Romania: "I believe that by establishing joint enterprises and producing together, it would make no sense for products made in Romania in cooperation with Italian enterprises to be subject to taxes when coming from Romania to Italy or vice versa" (ANIC, f.7).

The Italian President indicated that the Romanian requests fell under the jurisdiction of political representatives; nevertheless, his desire was to continue collaboration with Romania: "Allow me to remind you that I consider myself merely a good father to my children" (ANIC, f.10).

Foreign Minister Giuseppe Medici supported Nicolae Ceaușescu's statements: "We welcome this opportunity to inform you that we will strive to demonstrate that significant progress can be made in developing relations between two states with different regimes." Nicolae Ceaușescu had a positive outlook regarding relations developed between major powers, such as the USSR-USA or China-USA, which, in his opinion, significantly impacted international life. However, addressing global issues required the involvement not only of major powers but of all states, regardless of their size (ANIC, f.14, f.17-18). President Giovanni Leone concurred: "Regarding developing countries, we view them with great sympathy and agree to cooperate with these countries to facilitate their development process" (ANIC, f.29). Current issues between developed and less-developed states, considered crucial for a new collaboration policy, were also discussed, emphasizing the need to eliminate these disparities.

During the same meeting, the President of the Romanian State Council conveyed to the Italian members Romania's intention to develop diplomatic relations with Korea, following a request from the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which "asked us to communicate its desire for good collaboration relations with Italy" (ANIC, f.25). This wish was approved by President Leone, who stated, "We desire the same regarding Korea" (ANIC, f.28).

The visit concluded with a reiteration of the parties' agreement on the topics discussed: "Our concepts align with yours regarding the equality of rights among countries" (ANIC, f.29).

Following the meeting with the President of the Italian Republic, discussions were held with Giulio Andreotti, the President of the Council of Ministers, and other Italian politicians. During these meetings, several historically significant documents were signed.

Thus, on May 22, 1973, in Rome, the Solemn Joint Declaration was signed by Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the State Council; George Macovescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Giulio Andreotti, President of the Council of Ministers; and Giuseppe Medici, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Both states declared that "their reciprocal relations, as well as those with all other states, are founded on the norms of international law and the United Nations Charter. Thus, they are based on principles such as: the sacred right of each state to existence, independence, freedom, and national sovereignty; equal rights for all states; [...] the right and duty of states, regardless of their social or political systems, to cooperate in various fields; [...] non-interference under any pretext in matters within a state's national competence" (AME, file 2527, issue 220/1973, f.3).

Additionally, during the ceremony, several other agreements were signed: the Long-term Economic, Industrial, and Technical Cooperation Agreement, dated May 22, 1973, signed by Nicolae Ceaușescu, Ion Pășan, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Trade, Giulio Andreotti, and Giuseppe Medici; the Protocol of the Fourth Session of the Romanian-Italian Joint Cooperation Commission, signed by Ion Pășan and Matteo Matteoti, Minister of Foreign Trade; and the Maritime Navigation Agreement. Article 2 states, "The contracting parties will adopt necessary measures to improve navigation conditions between the Socialist Republic of Romania and the Italian Republic to stimulate the development of relations in this field" (MJ, 14.07.2020), signed by the Foreign Ministers of Romania and Italy.

In his speech during the ceremony for signing the Solemn Declaration, Ceaușescu emphasized that belonging to different socio-political alliances was not an obstacle to developing collaboration between states, and the signed documents, particularly the Solemn Joint Declaration and the Long-term Economic, Industrial, and Technical Cooperation Agreement, outlined new opportunities for future Romanian-Italian cooperation (ANIC, file 4/1973, Scântea newspaper, no. 9517, May 23, 1973).

Cultural and linguistic connections were evident in both Romanian press articles and speeches by Romanian and Italian political figures, including toasts made by President Giovanni Leone and Nicolae Ceaușescu at the Solemn Declaration ceremony. The Latin origin of both nations was frequently mentioned, linking the two states during all significant bilateral events.

Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti's speech emphasized global peace, stating that maintaining peace required strengthening ties with all nations, especially those culturally and friendly connected with Italy. He quoted poet Ovid, who died in exile on Romanian soil: "I see and approve the good things and avoid the bad ones" (ANIC, file 4/1973, Scântea newspaper, no. 9517, May 23, 1973).

The Romanian head of state's visit also included meetings with prominent leaders of the Italian Communist Party. On May 22, Nicolae Ceaușescu met Luigi Longo, President of the Italian Communist Party, in Genzano, near Rome, from 16:00 to 16:50. Attendees included PCI General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer and Sergio Serghe, head of the external section of PCI's Central Committee. According to archival documents, they discussed common interests related to international détente, security, and cooperation in Europe (ANIC, file 4/1973, Scântea newspaper, no. 9517, May 23, 1973).

Luigi Longo addressed international détente and military blocs, asserting the need to overcome political regime barriers among states: "As long as this international division exists, internal difficulties will persist, hindering actions toward our common goal—democratization and eliminating Cold War remnants." He added, "This is also your policy. [...] Romania is a country that counts" (ANIC, External Relations Section, file 73/1973, f. 2).

Nicolae Ceaușescu stated he discussed international issues with political representatives, mostly aligning with Italy's positions. However, regarding European security, despite highlighting the need for a permanent body, Italian counterparts had not decided, choosing to reflect further on this necessity.

Though talks on interstate collaboration concluded without fully satisfying Ceaușescu, the signing of significant official documents was a notable achievement. He also discussed his upcoming visit to northern Italy's industrial centers: "There are fields where we aim to establish joint ventures, and I hope things continue positively" (ANIC, External Relations Section, file 73/1973, f. 4).

Discussions with party leaders also covered common interests such as European security, noting preparations for a general European conference possibly beginning in summer, described as "a positive development" (ANIC, External Relations Section, file 73/1973, f. 5).

Throughout discussions, Luigi Longo expressed satisfaction and support for cooperation between capitalist Italy and socialist Romania. Collaboration with socialist states and parties would support Italy's détente process. Internal party issues, such as the Christian Democratic government's efforts to limit communist party international involvement, were also discussed. Responding to Longo, Ceaușescu emphasized, "Without active popular participation, continuity in this positive direction cannot be guaranteed. Both President Leone and Prime Minister Andreotti supported this and favored closer relations between trade unions and youth organizations" (ANIC, External Relations Section, file 73/1973, f. 6).

President Nicolae Ceaușescu expressed his stance regarding the political forces' trends toward the withdrawal of American troops from Europe, suggesting that socialist countries were mismanaging this issue by counting on agreements between states, which, he argued, did not necessarily entail such withdrawals but rather implied limitations on social progress. Consequently, Luigi Longo stated that the issues of non-interference by police forces, disarmament, intelligence services, and troop reductions would represent primary concerns in the forthcoming period.

Subsequently, President Nicolae Ceaușescu mentioned his good relations with the Italian Communist Party (PCI)—relations confirmed by Luigi Longo—as well as with the Soviet Union, socialist parties, and all European countries, citing examples like Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, also emphasizing the special attention given to former colonies. However, Ceaușescu expressed certain reservations regarding countries like Greece and Spain, where communist parties did not encourage diplomatic relations.

In turn, Luigi Longo mentioned the good relations maintained with the German Social Democratic Party, while Sergio Segre referred to positive discussions with François Mitterrand regarding European security, concluding with the need for closer collaboration among socialist and communist parties worldwide. At the end of the discussion, Nicolae Ceaușescu invited Luigi Longo and his wife, Bruna Longo, to Romania, wishing them good health. (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 13-14).

On May 23, 1973, between 08:15 and 09:05, conversations took place between Francesco

de Martino, National Secretary of the Italian Socialist Party, and Nicolae Ceaușescu, President of the State Council. During the meeting, the leaders first discussed the state of relations between the Italian Socialist Party and the Romanian Communist Party, then addressed significant issues regarding the international and European situation, with Francesco de Martino expressing concern about relations between the US and the Soviet Union.

The regions under the influence of these two states could experience increased pressure should collaboration between the two powers intensify. Additionally, they discussed the ongoing war, the situation in South Vietnam, the Middle East, and other areas.

Regarding the European context, Francesco de Martino expressed some concern about the implications of the Soviet Union's relations with West Germany, suggesting they could somewhat limit the influence of the two blocs, thus "one might believe this situation would evolve positively toward eliminating the remnants of war." (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 2).

President Nicolae Ceaușescu remarked that progress in relations between both the US and the Soviet Union, and between the US and China, could negatively influence bilateral agreements between Romania and Italy, particularly because new economic forces had emerged, closely connected with political forces, referencing the Common Market, where Germany and Japan played crucial roles.

Ceaușescu further noted that détente significantly depended on the trajectory and development of small and medium-sized countries in Latin America, Europe, and beyond, areas of particular interest to him. He also emphasized the necessity for active participation in international organizations such as the UN and their various meetings and debates. (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 4).

Regarding the European situation, the European Conference represented Romania's primary concern. Romania's position was that convening a comprehensive European conference, accompanied by adopting useful documents related to principles of relations, free exchanges in economy, culture, science, etc., as well as establishing a permanent body for contacts and meetings, would be beneficial. (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 5).

The discussion also covered the common goal of military blocs and arms reduction. Nicolae Ceaușescu advocated creating a climate of trust among states, suggesting that negotiations at the Vienna Conference could represent an initial step toward reducing arms and foreign troops in Central Europe and beyond, urging broader and firmer support from most countries. Italy's position was similar.

During the same meeting, Francesco de Martino mentioned the unofficial proposal at the time, regarding a new North Atlantic alliance suggested by Kissinger, which would extend to Japan, with Europe taking a subordinate role. The Italian politician confirmed that "if this pact were renewed based on Kissinger's proposals, it would only reinforce the blocs." (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 7). Nicolae Ceaușescu suggested the North Atlantic Pact could have economic advantages, again referencing the Common Market. From Ceaușescu's perspective, fostering economic collaboration among states with different political systems belonging to different blocs would diminish the importance of military alliances.

"The importance of democratic and progressive forces' efforts for détente and security in Europe and the world was underscored. The meeting took place in a friendly and cordial atmosphere." (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p. 8).

May 23, 1973, also holds significant historical importance for bilateral relations between Romania and Italy. On this date, between 23:20 and 00:30, a conversation occurred between Enrico

Berlinguer, Secretary-General of the PCI, representing the Italian Communist Party delegation, and Nicolae Ceaușescu, leader of the Romanian Communist Party. They were accompanied by Sergio Segre, member of the Central Committee and Head of the External Section of the PCI; Ion Pățan, member of the Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party; and Augustin Novelle, member of the Political Bureau and President of the International Policy Commission of the PCI Central Committee.

The discussion focused on two essential issues highlighted by PCI General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer: the Vienna problem concerning the disarmament conference and the report on détente in the Mediterranean, as well as the international conference of communist parties. As a solution to these issues, Berlinguer advocated for a new conference involving both socialist and capitalist communist parties to address collaboration and peace. He argued that such action was necessary so that “the process of détente and arms reduction should encompass the entire European area, including the Mediterranean” (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.3). Berlinguer deemed it crucial that all popular forces, including democratic ones in Western Europe, support this détente process.

Additionally, the Italian Communist Party representative expressed concern over Italy's tense situation, prompting domestic efforts toward détente and changes against reactionary or fascist organizations. This tension was fueled by various attacks strongly condemned by the population. Berlinguer stated, “In our view, these actions are the result of reactionary elements, but the most significant ones are coordinated by a reactionary center with foreign connections” (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.4).

Regarding international matters, Berlinguer emphasized his support and involvement in actions facilitating disarmament and reducing Mediterranean tensions.

During this meeting, President Nicolae Ceaușescu recalled his discussions with President Leone and the agreed-upon subjects, expressing satisfaction with the visit: “We appreciate that so far the visit has proceeded well” (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.80). Ceaușescu also referenced established relations among European parties and expressed his view that a communist-only conference might not yield the best results. Instead, he supported an international conference involving all parties, addressing issues such as foreign troops and European security (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.11).

The politician A. Novella also intervened, discussing with Ceaușescu the issue of troop withdrawal. Ceaușescu strongly advocated complete troop withdrawal, acknowledging its complexity, while Novella suggested, “If total withdrawal cannot be achieved, partial withdrawal would also be beneficial” (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.15).

Towards the end of the discussion, Ceaușescu reiterated the importance of intensifying international relations: “Let us enhance our international activity, strengthen bilateral cooperation, conduct broader work to mobilize public opinion, and expand collaboration with socialists, trade unions, and other democratic forces” (ANIC, Secția Relații Externe, file 73/1973, p.17).

Ceaușescu's visit to Italy concluded with the signing of significant documents, including a solemn declaration, a ten-year economic agreement, and additional protocols signed with the Italian Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

3. VISIT OF THE ROMANIAN HEAD OF STATE TO INDUSTRIAL CENTERS IN NORTHERN ITALY

The visit program continued on May 23, in Genoa, where President Nicolae Ceaușescu and his wife were welcomed by the city's mayor, Giancarlo Piombino, and prefect Giacomo Veglia. During the visit, the President of the State Council toured the Oscar Sinigaglia steelworks (Italsider group), closely examining the productivity of equipment, the organization of the production process, and achieved results (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.185).

The steelworks, "operational since 1953, equipped with modern technology, annually produces over 2,000,000 tons of steel" (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.187). President Ceaușescu was warmly greeted by Italian workers, who paid tribute to him and the Romanian people. They gathered enthusiastically to meet the Romanian representative. He also held discussions with Enrico Radaelli, president of the Italsider group, who expressed interest in the development of the steelworks in Galați, designed "to become one of Europe's most modern plants. We would be delighted to intensify and deepen the exchange of experience with Romanian technicians."

The conversation continued with the director of the steelworks, Giorgio Maestrini. The plant has its own port and includes "a large steel mill, hot and cold rolling mills, an automated electrolytic tinning line, and produces a variety of galvanized and tinned sheets, drawn pipes, and special steels" (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.3). Following this, President Ceaușescu visited the Art Museum at Palazzo Bianco (Galleria di Palazzo Bianco), home to famous artworks, paintings, and sculptures. On the way to the Genoa port, thousands of citizens warmly greeted President Nicolae Ceaușescu and other Romanian guests (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.194).

The visit continued on May 24 in Turin. President Ceaușescu, accompanied by Romanian officials and Romania's ambassador to Rome, Iacob Ionașcu, were joined by Italian officials, including Italy's ambassador to Bucharest, Antonino Restivo, and State Secretary Giulio Cajati. Upon arrival, Nicolae Ceaușescu and Elena Ceaușescu were welcomed by Guido Secreto, mayor of Turin, Giuseppe Salerno, prefect of Turin province, Stefano Milelli, mayor of Caselle, and other officials (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.200). Initially, the Romanian president visited the Fiat-Mirafiori plant, where he was received by general directors Francesco Rotta and Nicolo Gioia, as well as Fiat group president Giovanni Agnelli. Agnelli expressed joy over President Ceaușescu's interest in visiting Italian enterprises, seeing it as a confirmation of the leader's wish to strengthen Romanian-Italian collaboration.

This industrial giant produced approximately 90% of Italy's vehicles, along with a wide range of industrial products, including diesel engines, marine engines, helicopters, aircraft engines, agricultural tractors (both wheeled and tracked), road construction machinery, and various electronic products. The plant consisted of three main sections—bodywork, mechanics, and pressing—covering approximately 2.5 million square meters including buildings. President Ceaușescu received a miniature model of the first Fiat automobile, engraved with "In honor of the President of the State Council of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu." According to the Scânteia newspaper of May 14, 1973, Italian workers sent greetings to the Romanian people, saying "Long live Ceaușescu, long live Romania—many greeted" (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.201-202).

In the afternoon, President Ceaușescu visited the Olivetti factories in Ivrea (province of Turin). En route, he also visited Metalrex, part of the Tecmo industrial group, not included in the official program.

Here, Ceaușescu was greeted by Aldo Banioni, president of Tecmo, who presented the company's activities, highlighting its efficient and broad use of aluminum. An exhibition showcased fabrics incorporating aluminum fibers, some as thin as 0.3 millimeters (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.205). The Romanian president expressed particular interest in machinery production, prompting the hosts to show him a section specializing in such equipment. Discussions focused on cooperation with Romanian enterprises, with Tecmo's president affirming, "I know you highly value the development of the aluminum industry in your country" (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.3).

Upon arrival at Olivetti, Nicolae Ceaușescu was welcomed by company president Bruno Visentini and managing director Ottorino Beltrami. Established in the early 20th century, Olivetti produced Italy's first typewriter and evolved to offer advanced data processing systems essential to offices and businesses (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.206). Ceaușescu toured key plant sections and administrative buildings, receiving an electric typewriter as a tribute. The Romanian officials showed keen interest in production processes and technical features of machines. Ceaușescu expressed particular concern about "developing electronic machinery and numerically controlled machine tools" (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.3), underscoring mutual interest in collaboration with Romanian firms. The visit concluded in Milan at the Innocenti Santeustacchio industrial enterprise, where Ceaușescu was welcomed by delegate representative Dr. Jean Rodocanachi and deputy director Giorgio Benevento. The company specialized in machinery tools for steel, mechanical, and electromechanical industries. Ceaușescu met with workers, toured industrial sections, observed technological processes, and assessed machinery developments (ANIC, Foreign Relations Section, file 73/1973, p.216).

4. ITALIAN PRESS PERCEPTIONS OF THE VISIT

Regarding the Italian press, *Il Tempo* praised the Solemn Declaration as an important example for other European states by asserting the principle of state sovereignty. *Il Giornale di Calabria* highlighted the warm reception of the Romanian politician in Italy, noting: "he was greeted as a tenacious and courageous political leader, capable of successfully leading his country while constantly advocating for Romania's autonomy within the socialist camp" (AME, file 2527, issue 220/1973, p.3). On May 21, *La Stampa* remarked that "Ceaușescu represents an Eastern European country pursuing a national path towards communism and a foreign policy aimed at freeing small and medium-sized European countries from the hegemony of superpowers" (AME, file 2527, issue 220/1973, p.4).

Paese Sera notably published an article one day before the official visit, on May 20, dedicated to Romania's discussion proposals in Italy, suggesting they could put the host country in difficulty. The newspaper believed Ceaușescu's political ambitions and initiatives would not align with Italy's.

Nicolae Ceaușescu was perceived as the leader of the Bucharest group, holding the strongest and most concentrated authority. The group was expected to present a position requiring special attention from the Italian government (AME, file 2527, issue 220/1973, p.6). Also on May 20, *Avanti* emphasized the visit's importance, highlighting that the two states would have an opportunity to enhance friendly interstate relations, stating the Romanian government "advocates

for a climate of trust, collaboration, and understanding among European states and peoples" (AME, file 2527, issue 220/1973, p.8). Additionally, Italian politicians could express their stance on international issues. This showed that not only state representatives but also the Italian press esteemed Ceaușescu as a prominent figure. The official visit was viewed positively, suggesting mutual benefits for both states and other Western countries.

The warmth and friendship with which the Ceaușescus were received were also reflected in the Romanian newspaper *Scântea*, which noted: "The leader of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Nicolae Ceaușescu, and his wife Elena Ceaușescu received a grand welcome in the Italian Republic. The grand reception reflected the respect and esteem enjoyed by the socialist leader and the Romanian people due to their achievements, work, and actions fostering peace and international cooperation" (ANIC, file 4/1973, *Scântea*, no. 9516, May 22, 1973).

The visit was also monitored by political circles in Athens due to its coincidence with the European conference and the end of the Helsinki talks. Greek Deputy Foreign Affairs official Phaedon Annino Cavalieratos felt Italian authorities had underestimated the importance of the principle of non-interference, hoping "Romania's influence, notably President Ceaușescu, a firm advocate of this principle, will positively affect Rome's stance towards Athens" (AME, file 2525, telegram no.025182, 1973). Indian officials also praised the visit, stating that "no other head of state visiting Italy had received such cordiality and sympathy from both officials and the Italian population," implying the visit had enhanced Italy's international prestige (AME, file 2525, telegram no.055267, May 24, 1973).

Conversely, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was interested in discussions between the two parties regarding the Common Market, believing "the visit to Italy would reaffirm Romania's foreign policy principles and cooperation with other states" (AME, file 2525, telegram no.059525, May 23, 1973). Swiss diplomats, in talks with Secretary II M. Gheorghiu in Beijing, considered the Solemn Declaration's principles suitable for a similar Romanian-Swiss document (AME, file 2525, telegram no. 059529, May 24, 1973).

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, regarding Romania, although not all economic aspects were fully supported by the Italian side, the discussions between the heads of state had a propagandistic effect for future agreements, notably those from 1977. These included the Agreement on Mutual Guarantee of Investments and the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation on Income and Wealth. Additionally, significant official documents such as the Solemn Joint Declaration were signed.

The discussions between President Nicolae Ceaușescu and Giovanni Leone underscored both parties' desire to strengthen Romanian-Italian bilateral relations. Cooperation extended beyond economic matters, emphasizing fundamental international principles such as sovereignty and equality between states, and highlighting the importance of continuous dialogue between nations with different political systems.

Nicolae Ceaușescu demonstrated a broad vision regarding Romania's foreign policy, emphasizing diversified partnerships and balanced international cooperation. This dialogue exemplified how countries with varying political and economic systems can collaborate to address common challenges, promoting economic development and political stability.

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