

A FORM OF POST-WAR COOPERATION – SOVROM

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Abstract

The end of the Second World War generated major changes that profoundly marked our country's political, territorial, economic and social evolution. Within the activities aimed at the restoration and development of the post-war economy there are found the partnership forms expressed through Romania's cooperation relations with other countries, the modalities of achievement being different, over time, in relation to the purpose pursued and the circumstances characteristic of the stages in which they were accomplished.

The study focuses on the presentation of the Romanian-Soviet cooperation, in the form of the joint ventures - of SOVROM-type and highlights the ways of establishing the collaboration, the fields and the period in which they functioned, accompanied by concrete examples.

The research methodology was the study of the speciality literature and the selection of examples with practical data in the field.

Keywords: *partnership, cooperation, joint ventures, SOVROM, relations.*

Jel Classification: *H41; H44; L24; L38*

1. Introduction

The changes brought as a result of the end of the Second World War marked profoundly the evolution of our country at political, territorial, economic and social level. *The partnership forms*, from the moment of the end of the war, up to the end of the nine decade of the last century, have practically manifested itself within *the cooperation relations* developed by Romania, differently, externally from internally.

On external level, Romania's cooperation relations with other countries were subordinated to the political and economic situations developed among the world states, generated by the Second World War and to the events that followed its finalization, the form, the content and the consequences being different, according to the context; *on internal level*, these co-operations integrated and evolved according to the structural changes and the requirements of the Romanian economy, in the efforts of post-war recovery and further development.

On the domestic market, the relations have manifested itself within *the cooperativization* process, representing forms of organizing and development of production, in agriculture, industry and commerce. The stake was to promote the aid among the co-operative societies, principle, by virtue of which, these organizations manifested autonomy towards the state (Popescu G., 2014, p. 89).

The partnership forms on external level, expressed through cooperation relations with other

countries, have manifested, differently, over time, in relation to the modalities of achievement.

Below, the Romanian-Soviet cooperation relations, in the form of SOVROM-type joint ventures will be presented.

1.1. Romanian-Soviet cooperation - through SOVROM-type joint ventures (1945 – 1956)

A form of presence of the foreign capital in post-war Romania was represented by the societies called SOVROM, a partnership between Romania and U.R.S.S., concretized in the creation of mixed-concern bodies that operated, directly, through concessions or exploitation. They were the expression of a particular character of the forms of property existent in the Romanian economy, through the involvement of a significant volume of resources (raw materials, fuel, energy, human resources) and the presence in a certain share, of the foreign capital in Romania, in the period 1945-1956 (Desmireanu I, in Constantinescu N.N. et al., 2000, p. 140).

After the negotiations conducted on May 8, 1945, the collaboration agreements between the Romanian government and U.R.S.S. related to¹:

- an economic collaboration agreement between Romania and U.R.S.S.;
- a confidential protocol to the collaboration agreement;
- an agreement on mutual delivery of goods between Romania and the Soviet Union, [...];
- an annex protocol concerning pricing;
- a protocol for the liquidation of the old accounts [...] remained from the former Romanian-Soviet

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¹ Florian Banu (2004), p. 128, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes A.I.C.B fond C.C. al P.C.R., Secția Economică dosar nr. 18/1945, f. 1-27, fond Casa Regală dosar nr. 38/1945;

agreement of 1941².

The co-operation, materialized in the establishment of 16 Romanian-Soviet societies, included important fields of the Romanian economy (metallurgic, extractive, forestry industry, glassware etc.), the constitution principle being the equal contribution with capital, of the parties; in the case of the Soviet participation, this consisted of the German goods in Romania, which, according to the post-war treaties, came to U.R.S.S., afterwards, the Soviet side increasing its share with its own materials and equipment. (Mureșan M., Mureșan D., 1998, p. 366).

Below, examples of some companies that operated between the years 1945-1956, as well as elements of their constitution, based on agreements between the parties, are presented:

- **Maritime transport** – *Sovromtransport*, joint venture established in 1945; the contribution of the parties was as follows:

- Romania contributed with river vessels, tugs, objects of waterside installations and materials of technical provision and renovation of vessel and ports. There were also, leased to **Sovromtransport**, representative vessels of the Romanian fleet: Transilvania motorship 1100 tons of freight and 380 passengers and the Ardeal ship 6500 tons of freight and 140 passengers and important waterside facilities in Constanta, Galați, Brăila and Giurgiu ports (Banu F., 2004, pp. 134, 135);

- The Soviet party participated with four old cargoes requiring repairs (Nașcu I., in Constantinescu N. N. et al., 2000, p. 228-232), ten tugs of 5200 HP, four river barge of 370 HP and 740 tm, 47 non-propelled river barges - 47 447 tm, 23 petroleum tanks without propulsion - 19552 tm³ - the society was disbanded in 1954 (Nașcu I., in Constantinescu N.N. et al., 2000, p. 228-232).

Founders of the company:

- Of the part of Romania: State Administration of Romanian Fluvial Navigation – N.F.R., State Administration of Ports and Communications on Water (P.C.A.) and Anonymous Danube Navigation Society (S.R.D.) [Administrația de Stat a Navigațiunii Fluviale Române - N.F.R., Administrația de Stat a Porturilor și Comunicațiilor pe Apă (P.C.A.) and Societatea Anonimă de Navigație pe Dunăre (S.R.D.)].

- Of the part of U.R.S.S.: State Navigation Society for Freight and Travelers Transports on the Black Sea, the State Society for Navigation on Danube and the “Sovfrcaht” Union (Societatea de Stat de Navigație pentru Transporturi de Marfă și Călători pe Marea

Neagră, Societatea de Stat pentru Navigație pe Dunăre și Uniunea “Sovfrcaht”)⁴.

The objective of the company was “the administration and exploitation of river and maritime transports, the use of Romanian river and sea ports; the organization of river and maritime communications, the shipbuilding and sheap repair industry, expedition operations and commercial operations in commission, on the territory of Romania and abroad”⁵; the capital - 3 billion lei represented by 600 000 shares, with a face value of 5000 lei (Banu F., 2004, p. 134).

- **Air Transport** The Romanian-Soviet Society of Air Transports *TARS (Societatea româno-sovietică de Transporturi Aeriene – TARS)*, established as a result of the 1945 Convention.

- Romania has made available the goods and personnel of the airline transports company LARES - Romanian Air State Operated Lines (Linii Aeriene Române Exploatate de Stat), as well as 12 airports equipped with the related infrastructure; the company was subsidized by the state, and during its operation, the domestic air transport developed (Nașcu I., in Constantinescu N. N. et al., 2000, p. 236-242).

- The U.R.S.S. contributed with the supply of line airplanes, for the most part (Banu F., 2004, p. 135).

The objective of TARS company was “the establishment of the civilian air connections across the entire territory of Romania and in the Black Sea region, on the territory of U.R.S.S., between the civil airports Ismail, Odessa, Nicolaev, Cherson, Eupatoria, Simferopol”⁶. It had a share capital of 1.8 billion, represented by 36,000 nominative shares (Banu F., 2004, p. 135). A part of the capital would be covered by the right of use of airports, for a period of 30 years. (Banu F., 2004, p. 135).

At the closure of the operation of TARS company, the workers and the goods were sent under the Ministry of Auto Naval and Air Transports (Ministerul Transporturilor Auto Navale și Aeriene) and TAROM company was established (Nașcu I. in Constantinescu N.N. et al., 2000, p. 236-242).

- **The Petroleum Industry** *Sovrompetrol*, a company continued on the basis of the July 1945 convention (Banu F., p. 130, 2004). The confidential protocol in the field of oil meant the establishment of a Romanian-Soviet joint venture whereat the Romanian state and Romanian societies to take part⁷. The participation of the two states consisted of (Banu F., 2004, p.129):

- The Romanian State provided prospects for new, free land, with the common agreement of both

² Florian Banu (2004), p. 128, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București, quotes A.I.C.B. fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri – stenogramă (P.C.M.), dosar 5/1945, f. 21;

³ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 135, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București, quotes Ioan Chiper, Florin Constantiniu, Adrian Pop op. cit. p. 156;

⁴ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 134, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București, quotes M.O. nr. 172, 3 august 1945, p. 6, 583;

⁵ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 134, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București;

⁶ Florian Banu (2004), p. 135, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București,.

⁷ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 129, “Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București, quotes A.I.C.B. fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri – stenogramă (P.C.M.), dosar 5/1945, f. 22;

governments and 50% of the royalties to which it was entitled, percentage, of gross products.

- The Soviet Union contributed with the necessary machine to the functioning of society.

The Sovrompetrol society took over the entire activity of the Romanian oil industry, state-owned, following the act of nationalization in 1948. The society was liquidated in 1956 (Desmireanu I., in Constantinescu N. N. et al., 2000, p. 140)

The nominal value of shares brought at Sovrompetrol is presented in the table 1.

Table 1 Companies whose shares were taken over by the U.R.S.S.

Current Number	Society name	Shares in millions lei
1	Concordia	755,8
2	Colombia	325
3	Petrol Block	285,5
4	I.R.D.P.	115,5
5	Buna Speranță	15
6	Explora	59
7	Meotica	21,3
8	Sardep	43,3
9	Sarpetrol	34,9
10	Transpetrol	4,5
11	Continental	100
	TOTAL	1759,8

Source: Florian Banu (2004)⁸, p. 132, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București

- **Banking domain - Sovrombanc.** On August 14, 1945, the convention on the conditions for the establishment of the Soviet-Romanian Bank was signed, whereat the constitutive act and the status of the company, as anonymous society, were annexed (Banu F., 2004, p. 134).

The transfer of shares in the U.R.S.S. patrimony was regulated in 1945 (Law No. 573)⁹, namely: "the shares of the oil and banking companies (...) that had belonged to physical or legal persons of German nationality and who have passed into the patrimony of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics to cover the war damage caused by Germany will be transferred to the shareholders' registers of the respective companies,

namely: the shares of the oil companies under the name of "Obedinienie Ucmeft" and the bank shares under the name of the bank of long-term lending of industry and electrification, "Prombank" U.R.S.S."¹⁰.

Participants in the social capital of the Soviet-Romanian Bank:

- Participation of the Soviet side was of 600 million lei in return for 6000 shares of the Soviet-Romanian Bank (Banu F., 2004, p. 133).

- The Romanian side paid 2.67 billion lei and also contributed with shares from different banks (The Romanian Credit Bank, Chrissoveloni Bank, Bank of Discount - Banca de Credit Român, Banca Chrissoveloni, Banca de Scont). The Romanian shareholders acquired shares at the Savrombanc at the value of 350,000 lei/share, higher than the nominal value of a share (100,000 lei). Uzinele de Fier and Domeniile Reșița paid 102 million lei in cash and received 292 shares of the Sovrombanc bank, in nominal value, of 29.2 million lei¹¹ (Banu F., 2004, p. 134).

Article 4 of the Constitutive Act of the Soviet-Romanian Bank S.A., Sovrombanc, stated that the Romanian State was to submit in the bank accounts, the amount of 1.5 billion lei, within 15 days, "amount to be returned to the Romanian state, by The Founding Group, respectively, the Romanian shareholders, through the annual deposit at the State House, of 25% of the dividend distributed to the shares belonging to the Romanian Group"¹². The main activity of **Sovrombanc** was "financing commercial operations between U.R.S.S. and Romania and of the operations that are to be carried out by the companies constituted in Romania"¹³.

- **Wood Industry** The *Sovromlemn* Society was established as anonymous society on the basis of the "Convention for the Exploitation, Industrialization and Valuation of Wood Materials" on March 20th 1946 ("Convenția pentru exploatarea, industrializarea și valorificarea materialelor lemnoase" 20 martie 1946)¹⁴. Founders of the company¹⁵:

- The Soviet side - Stanislavlesprom and "Exportless" Union (Uniunea "Exportless");

- The Romanian side – C.A.P.S., „The Orthodox Church Fund in Bucovina de Sud”, „The common goods Ciuc”, „The wealthy community of the 44 Guard village in Năsăud”, „The cooperative of forest owners for wood exploitation in Gheorghieni”, Forestry

⁸ Florian Banu (2004), p. 131, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes Anexa 1 in Legea 573, M.O. nr. 161, 19 iulie 1945, pp. 6158-6159;

⁹ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 131, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes Legea 573, M.O. nr. 161, 19 iulie 1945, pp. 6158-6159;

¹⁰ Florian Banu (2004), p. 131, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes art. 1 din Legea nr. 573;

¹¹ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 134, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes M.O. nr. 245, 26 octombrie 1945, p. 9451;

¹² Florian Banu, 2004, p. 134 "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes M.O. nr. 245, 26 octombrie 1945, p. 9451;

¹³ Florian Banu (2004), 134, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București;

¹⁴ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 140, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București, quotes M.O. nr. 101, 1 mai 1946, pp. 4402-4407;

¹⁵ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 140, "Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Solvrom (1936 – 1956)", Editura Nemira, București;

Company Forema S.A., Autonomous Forest Company „Nădrag”, Company „Steaua”, The Succession Mihail. D. Sturdza (Fondul Bisericesc Ortodox din Bucovina de Sud, „Bunurile Comune Ciuc”, „Comunitatea de avere a celor 44 de comune grănicerești din Năsăud”, Cooperativa proprietarilor de păduri pentru exploatarea de lemn din Gheorghieni”, Societatea Forestieră „Forema S.A.”, Societatea autonomă Forestieră „Nădrag”, Societatea „Steaua”, „Succesiunea Mihail. D. Sturdza”).

According to the Article 1 of the Convention, the purpose of establishing the Romanian-Soviet Forestry Society - Sovromlemn was “collecting, production and distribution of wood materials”¹⁶.

- **The Gas Industry** - *Sovromgaz*, founded in March 1946, having as object of activity the exploitation of the reserves of methane gas in Podișul Transilvaniei (Banu F., 2004, p. 141).

- **The film industry** - *Sovromfilm*¹⁷, set up in March 1946 for the purpose of introducing Russian culture, for the same purpose, being also the constitution of A.R.L.U.S. Association for Enhance Ties with the Soviet Union (Asociația pentru Strângerea Legăturilor cu Uniunea Sovietică), „Cartea Rusă” Publishing House and the Soviet-Romanian Museum (Banu F., 2004, p. 141).

- Three other societies, *Sovromcărbune*, *Sovrommetal și Sovromconstrucții*¹⁸, were founded on the basis of the conventions of July 1949.

- *Sovromcărbune*, established in 1949, by Decree no. 546 (Official Bulletin No. 54 of August 20, 1949) (Decretul nr. 546 -Buletinul Oficial nr. 54 din 20 august 1949), with a share capital of 675 thousand lei, the contribution of each party being equal (by 50%)¹⁹, with the following composition (Banu F., 2004, pp. 142, 143):

- the patrimony of the former „Petroșani” society, to which the Soviet side participated with 61.65% of the capital, coming from actions yielded by Hungary, on the war compensation account, and the rest of 38.5% belonged to the Romanian state, follow-up the nationalization. In the year 1947 the “Petroșani” company was taken over by the Soviet side, due to owning majority of shares;

- mining nature goods - mines that constituted share of the Romanian side, Anina, Dorman, Secu, Armeniș and Sinersig in Banat, whereat the Soviet side had a capital share of about 33%;

- assets of the former “Lonea” company; the Soviet

side had a share of 5.6%, the remaining of 94.4% belonged to the Romanian state;

- mining nature assets of the lignite mining group in the Schitu Golești basin (Câmpulung) which had belonged to the former Concordia company.

The latest SOVROM societies were set up in 1952.

- *Sovromutilajpetrolier* - the object of activity was the production of oiler equipment; it was consisted of a group of about ten enterprises joined within trust for refineries and oiler equipments building. The newly established trust also supplied Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, giving Romania, the position of the greatest oiler equipment producing country.

At the proposal of the U.R.S.S., the Romanian state accepted that the redemption of 50% of the value of the enterprises belonging entirely to the Romanian state and that were to enter into the new company, to be done by transferring to the Romanian state ownership, of some former German enterprises that U.R.S.S. held in Romania. Thus, the Romanian State and U.R.S.S. were to become equal partners in this SOVROM²⁰.

- *Sovromnaval* was established as a consequence of the fact that in *Sovromtransport*, the shipyards were not used, prevalently, to their entire capacity (Banu F., 2004, p.144).

In the new society, the contribution of the Romanian state consisted in the shipyards in Galați, Braila, Constanța and Turnu-Severin, owned by the Romanian state (previously leased to Sovromtransport society); these became a joint Romanian-Soviet property by the redemption by the Soviet Union, of 50% of the value of the above yards, less Turnu-Severin²¹.

- *Sovromquartit* established by the signing of the Governmental Convention in December 1951; began to develop its activity in April 1952, with the ore reserves discovered in Băița-Bihor²². The object of activity was the geological research for discovering the uranium digging in Romania, its extraction and exploitation; also, there have been added construction works, motorways, railways, industrial buildings, dwellings, power lines²³.

The year 1952 was the last stage of establishment of Sovroms and penetration into the Romanian economy, followed-up by a process of decline and liquidation, proving to be disadvantageous.

The presence of SOVROM-type societies on fields of activity, in the economy of the country, with

¹⁶ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 138, „Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Sovrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București quotes Art. 1 from Convention;

¹⁷ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 141, „Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Sovrom (1936 – 1956)”, quotes ***România în anii socialismului 1948 – 1978, București, 1980, p. 182;

¹⁸ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 142, „Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Sovrom (1936 – 1956)” quotes ***Economia României între anii 1944-1959, București, 1959, p. 534;

¹⁹ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 142, „Asalt asupra economiei României. De la Solagra la Sovrom (1936 – 1956)”, Editura Nemira, București;

²⁰ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 144 quotes A.I.C.B. fond P.C.M. stenograme, dosar nr. 8/1952, f. 22;

²¹ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 144 quotes A.I.C.B. fond P.C.M. stenograme, dosar nr. 8/1952, f. 24

²² Florian Banu, 2004, p. 144 quotes ***Ochii și urechile poporului. Convorbiri cu generalul Nicolae-Pleșiță – dialoguri consemnate de Viorel Patrichi, București, 2001, p. 219;

²³ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 145 quotes A.I.C.B. fond C.C. al P.C.R. Cancelarie, dosar 6/1963, vol. II f. 378;

reference to the number of enterprises set up and the staff employed is described in the table below (Table 2).

Table 2 The presence of Sovroms in the Romanian economy

Industrial branch	Number of business	Number of employees
Energy	1	195
Extractive	31	7391
Metallurgical	11	12032
Chemical	8	1893
Buildings	1	631
Wood	29	7777
Graphic art	1	2
Textile	1	19
Transports	59	1539
Services	16	131
Trade-credit	33	406
Total	191	32 016

Source: Florian Banu, 2004, p. 165 quotes Aurel Negucioiu, „Proprietatea Socialistă în România”, București, 1987, p. 111

The largest number of enterprises functioned in the fields of transport, trade, extractive industry and wood.

The liquidation of the Sovroms began in the year 1953 and meant the passing of several stages, by obtaining the approval from Moscow, concerning the transfer of Soviet-Romanian joint ventures to the Romanian state property, by redemption of the Soviet side, by Romania, namely: 1953 - 9 societies; 1954 - 5 societies; 1956- 2 societies.

Following-up the decision taken by the Soviet government, the amount scheduled for redemption, for the enterprises transferred in the Romanian state property, was reduced by 4.3 billion lei, whereby 1.5 billion lei, for the former German wealth. The

redemption of the value of the Soviet share ownership part was to be in progress at equal annual installments, echeloned on 15 years, the payment being considered a credit granted to Romania, without interest²⁴.

2. Conclusions

The SOVROM-type societies in the respective economic branches had as a model, the Soviet-type socialist enterprises and functioned as levers of control over large economic areas.

Following-up signing of the Moscow Treaty of May 8, 1945, the German industrial properties in Romania were included in Romanian-Soviet joint ventures, which have ensured the exploitation of natural resources, over a long period of time. The former German mixed properties, of great importance, in Romania, were taken over by the Romanian-Soviet joint ventures - 1945-1946, and the rest have been managed by the Romanian state, requiring high costs, until 1948, when the last transfers of property were made to U.R.S.S.²⁵.

In the relations of alliance with the foreign capital, Romania has, incessantly, maintained its political orientation towards ensuring economic independence, regardless of the political regime.

This form of partnership, according to the opinion of some authors, was not advantageous for our country, and the liquidation was, also, done, to the detriment of the Romanian part, by setting-up a amount of money, for the Soviet side, larger, disproportionate to their actual share (Mureșan M., Mureșan D., 1998, p. 366).

The economic relations between the two countries were at the disadvantage of Romania; a series of decisions concerning the production selling-out, the investments, labor force, were subject to the Soviet part accord; it was incumbent on the Romanian state to provide with a part of the benefits, for the Soviet partner, regardless of whether the enterprise made or not a profit (Constantinescu N. N., 2000).

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²⁴ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 174 quotes Scânteia, 5 decembrie 1956;

²⁵ Florian Banu, 2004, p. 179 quotes A.I.C.B. fond C.C. al P.C.R. Cancelarie dosar nr. 11/1946, f. 4;

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