

**Italian Economic and Political Interests in Romanian Ports:  
Shipping Companies and Consular Representatives  
(1880–1940)**

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**Abstract**

Between 1880 and 1940, Italy showed particular interest in the economic and geopolitical opportunities offered by Romanian ports along the Danube and the Black Sea. The promotion of Italian economic and political interests in this region relied on two complementary mechanisms: shipping activities and consular representation.

During this period, Romanian ports hosted extensive trade and navigation activities carried out by four major Italian companies: Florio & Rubattino, Lloyd Triestino, SITMAR, and Navigazione Generale Italiana. In addition, Italy established a consular network in five ports (Galați, Brăila, Sulina, Constanța, and Giurgiu), with 40 officials stationed there.

The main hub of Italian consular representation was the port of Galați, with 19 representatives, followed by Brăila, with 12. The direct link between these two levers of Italy's economic and political influence in Romanian ports was also evident in the fact that shipping company agents often held consular positions.

**Keywords:** Danube, ports, Italy, shipping companies, consular representation, consular officials

**Introduction**

**Purpose of the Study** – The aim of this study is to highlight, for the period under review, the economic and political presence of Italy in Romanian ports, reflected in the activities of shipping companies and consular representatives. The scientific novelty lies in emphasising Italy's interest in the strategic capabilities of Romanian port cities, analysed through the lens of their level of economic and political representation.

**Historiography** – The historiographical substance of this study is based on the analysis of a significant volume of unpublished documents from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest (AMFAR), included in *Issue 68 – Societies of River, Maritime and Air Navigation; Romanian and Foreign* and in the *Collection – Foreign Representatives in Romania – Staff of Legations and Foreign Consulates*. In the same category of sources, we also mention the Galați County Service of the National Archives, *European Commission of the Danube – General Secretariat Collection*. The information drawn from these sources has been supplemented with data from specialized works by

Romanian and foreign authors such as Mariana Cojoc, Gheorghe Christodorescu, Cristian Constantin, Alexandru David, Emil Octavian Mocanu, Moise N. Pacu, Royal Meeker, and Roger Ravard.

**Context** – The second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century revealed an increased interest of the great powers in the geostrategic and economic value of Romanian ports along the Danube and the Black Sea. These ports became the focus of intense competition among European state actors, both in economic and commercial activities expressed through navigation and in political influence, whose main mechanism of operation was diplomatic and consular representation.

Starting in the 1880s, the volume of trade and navigation in Romania's port cities—particularly Galați and Brăila—increased substantially, highlighting the exceptional potential of the Romanian Danube, which needed to be connected to global economic routes. Romanian ports were home to extensive Austrian, French, Russian, Italian, British, and Greek maritime networks, which offered new avenues for engaging with European realities. Galați and Brăila formed a true *economic hub* whose capabilities were later complemented at the dawn of the 20th century by those of the port of Constanța.

The intensive navigation activities in Romanian ports led to a growing presence in the country of agencies and agents representing foreign shipping companies. The agencies of foreign navigation societies operated in parallel with consular offices, enjoying the same rights, except for diplomatic immunity.

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century witnessed a complex landscape of navigation companies operating in Romanian ports. Alongside Austrian, French, and Russian companies, British, German, Italian, Hungarian, Turkish, and Greek companies also entered the scene. The interwar period marked further diversification among the actors involved in navigation on the Romanian Danube, with the emergence of newly formed national states. (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *Companii de navigație la Gurile Dunării 1830 – 1939* – *Navigation companies at the Danube Mouths 1830 - 1939*, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2022, pp. 247 - 249)

By the 1880s, Italy had established itself as an important player in the European geopolitical equation, actively exercising economic and political influence in strategic areas such as the Maritime Danube and the Black Sea. From the 1880s until the outbreak of the Second World War, Italy maintained a strong presence in Romanian ports, both through four major shipping companies and through the establishment of an extensive consular network.

In the following sections, we will highlight aspects related to Italy's economic interests (shipping companies) and political interests (consular representation) in Romanian ports along the Danube and the Black Sea.

## **I. Italian Navigation in Romanian Ports**

From 1886 until the end of the interwar period, Italy maintained a significant presence in Romanian ports through its well-known shipping companies: Florio & Rubattino, Lloyd Triestino, SITMAR, and Navigazione Generale Italiana. (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *Navigation companies*, p. 227 - 230)

### **I.1 Florio & Rubattino (Navigazione Generale Italiana)**

A famous Italian shipping company, established in 1881 through the merger of the *I & V. Florio* company, based in Palermo, and *R. Rubattino*, operating out of Genoa. Benefiting from significant support from the Italian authorities, *Florio & Rubattino* operated

routes to ports all over the world (Royal Meeker, *History of Shipping Subsidies*, Macmillan, New York, 1905, p. 107). The first record of its presence in the Danube ports dates to 1886, when it extended, on an optional basis, a line already subsidized by the Italian government.

On 4 July 1886, the company's agent requested permission from the local authorities in Galați and Brăila to install landing stages in these towns (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe – The Archive of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (AMFAR), *Problema (Issue) 68*, Vol. 15, Italy 1886–1942, *Note 1117/1886*).

At that time, Italian steamships were running weekly services but did not have any pontoons of their own in the two ports (AMFAR, *Issue 68*, Vol. 20 Ports situation, 1881–1941, *Memoire*. Broadly in Emil Octavian Mocanu, *Portul Portul Brăila de la regimul de porto-franco la Primul Război Mondial (1836–1914), Brăila port from the porto-franco regime to the First World War (1836 – 1914)*, Editura Istros, Brăila, 2013, p. 273).

In 1892, certain disputes were recorded between the Italian company and the Romanian authorities regarding the conduct of commercial operations without being registered at the district court, as well as the fact that the company's headquarters and agencies in Romania were unknown (AMFAR, *Issue 68*, Vol. 16, *Note 12.723 din 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1892*).

*Florio & Rubattino's* ships handled a significant volume of cargo traffic, their contribution to the development of trade with Romania being substantial (Emil Octavian Mocanu, *op. cit.*, p. 273). In 1889, Italian vessels brought to Romania nearly 1,029 tonnes of products, mainly from ports on the Adriatic Sea, and exported from the Danube approximately 35,000 tonnes of goods, mostly cereals loaded at Brăila (Moise N. Pacu, *Cartea județului Covurluiu. Note geografice, istorice și în deosebi statistice – The Book of Covurlui county. Geographical, historical and statistic notes*, Institutul Grafic I.V. Socecu, București, 1891, p. 411).

During the same period, the European Commission of the Danube recognized *Florio & Rubattino* as a postal and passenger company, noting the good travel conditions for passengers. In 1890, the company's fleet included the vessels *Taormina*, *Drepano*, *Selinante*, *Imera*, and *Simeto*, equipped for both postal and passenger transport (Serviciul Județean al Arhivelor Naționale Galați – Galați County Service of National Archives - GCSNA, Comisia Europeană a Dunării – European Commission of the Danube, *Protocol 472, 14 mai 1890, The Report of Inquiry Commission, 8<sup>th</sup> of May 1890*).

In 1895, the Italian company occasionally operated postal services for the Romanian state, even though no formal agreement existed (AMFAR, *Issue 68*, Vol. 15, Ministry of Interior to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *no. 30.938/3<sup>rd</sup> of July 1895*).

The Romanian Maritime Service chartered from *Florio & Rubattino* the steamships *Cobra* and *Ignazio Florio*, the latter of which was renamed *Principesa Maria* and later purchased by the Romanian operator. In 1903, the Italian company held first place in merchandise imports at Constanța (Gheorghe Christodorescu, *Portul Constanța – Mișcarea comercială și maritimă în anul 1903 – Port of Constanța – Commercial and maritime movement in 1903*, Tipografia Ovidiu, Constanța, 1905., pp. 204–206).

Based on this, Eduard Tozzi, the agent of *Florio & Rubattino*, sent the Romanian authorities a memorandum regarding the need to obtain a private landing stage in the port of Constanța (AMFAR, *Issue 68*, Vol. 6, Austria-Hungary, River and maritime navigation. Complaints, 1889–1927, *The Address no. 27.581/4<sup>th</sup> of May 1904*). As we shall see below, Eduard Tozzi would become the Italian consular agent in Constanța in 1906.

From its first appearance until the First World War, *Florio & Rubattino* maintained an uninterrupted presence in Romanian ports, with varying frequency, but the company mainly aimed to provide weekly services with increasingly larger vessels. In 1912–1913, the European Commission of the Danube recorded a direct route, with only two sailings each year, between Genoa and Sulina.

### 1.2. Lloyd Triestino

The end of the First World War brought significant changes to the fleets of companies operating on the Danube and the Black Sea, stemming from the new geopolitical realities and the agreements between the victorious and defeated states. One such company affected by these agreements was the Italian *Lloyd Triestino*, the successor to the Austrian company *Austrian Lloyd*. Efforts to return the former *Austrian Lloyd* to the Romanian ports were undertaken by Italy's diplomatic representatives, who, in March 1920, requested that the Romanian authorities recognise *Lloyd Triestino* as the “legal and de facto” successor to the former Austrian company, whose assets, rights, and interests in Romania were in the process of liquidation. The Italian Legation in Bucharest argued that *Austrian Lloyd* could no longer be considered a company belonging to a former enemy state as of January 1919, prior to a decree of April 1919 that annulled all concessions granted by the Romanian state to this company (AMFAR, Issue 68, Vol. 15, *Memoire MOFA*; briefly in Cristian Constantin, *O istorie a companiilor de navigație străine de la Dunărea de Jos – A history of foreign navigation companies on the Lower Danube*, Editura Etnologică, București, 2020, p. 70).

The Italian diplomatic mission in Romania maintained that the change of name to *Lloyd Triestino* and its registration at the Italian Commercial Court in Trieste were sufficient arguments to qualify the new company as a legal entity with its headquarters in Trieste (a city that had returned to Italy after the war) and recognised by the Italian judicial authority as having Italian nationality. These arguments were considered sufficient for *Lloyd Triestino* to benefit from the rights of the former Austrian company. Legally speaking, the Romanian state could not annul the concessions granted to *Austrian Lloyd*, which had not been dissolved but had merely changed its nationality. In this context, the Italian Legation in Bucharest requested that our authorities provisionally grant the right to use the real estate and fixed assets that the former company owned in Romanian ports (Constantin, *O History*, pp. 70–71)

Discussions on this matter continued in 1922, when the Ministry of Justice in Bucharest issued a decision recognising as Italian only those companies that already had this status before the war. The Italian Legation contested this decision, receiving a response from the Romanian authorities only in 1925, in a document stating that the Romanian Government had considered the possibility that the transfer of the rights and obligations of the former *Austrian Lloyd* navigation company to *Lloyd Triestino* had been carried out in accordance with the rules and provisions of the Peace Treaties (Constantin, *O History*, pp. 70–71).

Despite these legal and administrative uncertainties, in September 1922 the ships of *Lloyd Triestino* were operating in Romanian ports on two routes: Levante Celera A, covering the ports of Trieste, Venice, Brindisi, St. Quaranta, Corfu, Piraeus, Dardanelles, Istanbul, Burgas, Varna, Constanța, and Sulina; and Levante Celera B, which served the ports of Trieste, Venice, Brindisi, Corfu, Piraeus, Dardanelles, Istanbul, Constanța, and Sulina. In 1923, *Lloyd Triestino* vessels also had optional stops in the ports of Burgas and Varna (GCSNA, Fund European Commission of the Danube, General Secretariat, 1920–1924, Vol. 121, f. 98–99 and 104).

In February 1925, the Romanian authorities prohibited the crews of the Italian company's ships from disembarking in Romanian ports, except for the captain and one officer, for the purpose of carrying out the required formalities. This measure was reportedly taken amid suspicions of possible shipments of military equipment to the USSR (Mariana Cojoc, *Constanța – port internațional. Comerțul exterior al României prin portul Constanța 1878–1939, Constanța – International port. Romania's Foreign Trade through port of Constanța*, Editura Cartea Universitară, București, 2006, p. 245.)

In 1929, the company's vessels also operated a route that included the following ports:

**Departure:** Trieste, Rijeka, Venice, Bari, Brindisi, St. Quaranta, Corfu, Piraeus, Volos, Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Varna (optional), Constanța, Sulina, Galați, Brăila;

**Arrival:** Brăila, Galați, Sulina, Constanța (optional), Burgas, Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Volos, Piraeus, Patras, Brindisi, Ancona, and Venice (GCSNA, Fund European Commission of the Danube, Secretariatul General 1920–1924, Vol. 329, f. 187).

In the same year, the Italian company used 100 meters of quay and 900 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouses in the port of Galați, ensuring connections between Italian ports and Galați and Brăila (Roger Ravard, *Le Danube maritime et le port de Galatz*, Librairie Moderne de Droit et de jurisprudence Ernest Sagot, Paris, 1929, p. 178)

In 1932, *Lloyd Triestino* merged with the *SITMAR* and *Società Marittima Italiana* companies, developing a service with ships sailing from the Mediterranean to the Far East, with Romanian ports included in the Adriatic – Danube route (GCSNA, Fund European Commission of the Danube, Secretariatul General 1920–1924, Vol. 121, ff. 218, 224, 233–234, 313 and 314)

As the data in the table below shows, in the second half of the 1930s, the frequency of *Lloyd Triestino*'s sailing to Danube ports increased, with weekly connections being established (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *Navigation companies*, p. 229)

**Table: Situation of Lloyd Triestino vessels recorded by the ECD between 1921 and 1938**

Trieste – Galați		
Year	No	Tonnage
1921	23	61.802
1922	21	56.283
1923	41	108.689
1924	18	45.755
1925	20	49.461
1926	21	53.483
1927	21	52.743
1928	21	52.157
1929	10	44.798
1930	20	52.167
1931	21	47.604
1932	37	102.093

1933	54	142.014
1934	39	107.476
1935	39	103.176
1936	41	98.167
1937	43	107.860
1938	41	103.609

### I.3. Navigazione Generale Italiana

It maintained a continuous presence in the Maritime Danube ports throughout the entire interwar period. In April 1930, the Italian company informed the European Commission of the Danube of its intention to establish a regular route between the Danube and the Mediterranean Sea.

This route was also to have a postal service function and was operated with three ships, calling at (some optionally) the following ports: Genoa, Livorno, Naples, Messina, Catania, Piraeus, Istanbul, Constanța, Sulina, Tulcea, Reni, Izmail, Chilia, Galați, and Brăila (GCSNA, Fund European Commission of the Danube, Secretariatul General 1920–1924, Vol. 121, f. 66, 77 and 137; Broadly in Cristian Constantin, *A history*, pp. 189–190.)

**Table: Vessels of Navigazione Generale Italiana recorded by the ECD between 1921 and 1938**

<b>Genova – Galați</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Tonnage</b>
1921	2	4.641
1922	4	9.045
1923	24	50.451
1924	18	43.453
1925	18	36.644
1926	17	49.716
1927	18	45.378
1928	19	47.200
1929	19	52.586
1930	17	58.373
1931	22	75.736
1932	18	62.104
1933	20	68.415
1934	20	67.877
1935	20	67.032
1936	27	89.391
1937	18	60.463
1938	25	81.691

**Source:** Annual ECD navigation statistics

*I.5. Società Italiana Transporti Marittimi (SITMAR)*

The *Italian Maritime Services Company* distinguished itself through a notable presence in Romanian ports during the interwar period. In 1922, it operated a line calling at the ports of Genoa, Livorno, Naples, Messina, Piraeus, Smyrna, Istanbul, Constanța, Galați, and Brăila, which, starting in 1924, also included Burgas and Varna. In 1929, it had 100 meters of quay and 540 m<sup>2</sup> of warehouse space in the port of Galați (Ravard, *Le Danube*, p. 178).

In March 1930, the route described above also included optional calls at the port of Ismail (GCSNA, Fund European Commission of the Danube, Secretariatul General, 1920–1924, Vol. 121, f. 82)

Between 1930 and 1932, extensive correspondence was recorded between the Italian company and the European Commission of the Danube, concerning: changes to the navigation schedules of its vessels; cases of replacing a ship on a route with another vessel; explanations for possible delays of its ships or for technical issues they encountered (Alexandru David, *Trade and Shipping on the maritime Danube during the Interwar Period (1919–1938)*, Analele Universității Dunărea de Jos din Galați. Seria Istorie 10/2011, pp. 113–133).

Similar to other Italian shipping companies present in Romanian ports, *SITMAR*'s agent in Romania was the *Romanian Joint-Stock Company Gattorno*, with offices in Galați and Brăila. As will be shown below, regarding the direct link between navigation and consular representation, the Italian consul in Brăila in 1922 was Adriano Gattorno, a member of the family that owned the *Romanian Joint-Stock Company Gattorno*.

The Italian state closely monitored the situation of the *SITMAR* company and provided support, including by intervening with the Romanian authorities on matters related to its current operations. Thus, in 1930, the Italian Legation in Bucharest requested from the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs a point of view on how the establishment of free zones in Romanian ports would affect the advantages enjoyed by *SITMAR*'s postal vessels (AMFAR, Issue 68, Vol. 15, *Report no. 2598/1930*).

## II. The Italian Consular Network in Romanian Ports

Italian consular activity in Romanian cities began in 1841, with the appointment of Vice Consul Pascal Lamberti in Galați (AMFAR - *Collection – Foreign Representatives in Romania – Staff of Legations and Foreign Consulates, File 11 – Italy*)

During the period under review, Italy had 40 consular representatives in 5 Romanian ports: Galați – 19, Sulina – 3, Brăila – 12, Constanța – 5, and Giurgiu – 1.

The dynamics of Italian consular representation in Romanian ports involved the presence in office of the following officials:

### Galați

**Simonietti** – Served as consul from 9 October 1878 to February 1881. Held the noble title of Knight (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, S2, *Note 1896/1878, The General Consular Agency of Italy*).

**Jean Paul Riva** – Ended his term as Consul General in Galați in the summer of 1888.

**Pasquale Corte** – Served as Consul General in Galați from June 1888 to March 1890 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, C3, *Note 117/1888, Italian Legation*).

**Angelo Matteucci** – In 1890, was part of the consular team in Galați (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, C3, *Note 424/1890, Italian Legation*).

*Giullio (Julles) Tesi* – In March 1890, was appointed consul in Galați, replacing P. Corte. In July of the same year, he became Consul General, a position he held until his death in May 1899. During his mandate as Consul General, Tesi also served as Italy's representative to the European Commission of the Danube (ECD) (AMFAR, Representatives, *Note 429/1890*; T4, *Note 464/1890 Italian Legation*; *Telegram 158/1899 MOFA*).

*G. Saint Martin* – In May 1899, served as Vice Consul in Ruse (Bulgaria) and was tasked with managing the Consulate in Galați until a new appointment was made (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, G2, *Note 1002/1899, Italian Legation*).

*Nicolai Pappalepore* – Marquis of Cometo, appointed Consul General in Galați in December 1899. He also took over as Italy's representative to the ECD. At that time, the consular district of the Italian office in Galați included the counties of Covurlui, Tecuci, Tutova, Vaslui, Fălciu, Iași, Botoșani, Dorohoi, Suceava, Neamț, Roman, Bacău, Putna, Tulcea, and Constanța (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, P1, *Note 2302/1899, Italian Legation, Royal Decree 23529/1899*).

*Ludovic de Marquis Centuriano* – Took over the leadership of the Galați office temporarily in December 1905 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, C9, *Note 2654/1905, Italian Legation*).

*Paolo Grande* – Appointed Consul General in February 1906. In November of the same year, he ended his mandate for health reasons (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, G3, *Note 442/1906, Italian Legation*).

*Henri Acton* – Appointed Consul General in November 1906. Held the noble title of Knight. Also served as Italy's representative to the ECD (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, A3, *Note 2135/1906, Italian Legation*).

*Guido Neli Lupi de Soragna* – Took over the mandate of Consul General from H. Acton in October 1908. Held the noble title of Marquis (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, S5, *Notes 2250/1908, 2453/1908, Italian Legation*).

*Julien de Visart* – Took over from Guido de Soragna in February 1909. Held the noble title of Count. Like his predecessors, he also represented Italy at the ECD. Served a five-year term, ending in December 1914. Before leaving his post, he requested and was granted an audience with the King of Romania (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, V3, *Notes 264/1908, Italian Legation*; *34827/1914, General Consulate of Italy in Galați*; *35066/1914, Royal Decree*).

*Vittore Siciliani* – Appointed Consul General and Italy's representative to the ECD in June 1920. At that time, the jurisdiction of the Italian office in Galați included the regions of Moldavia, Dobruja, and Brăila County (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, S7, *Note 1429/1920, Italian Legation*).

*Riccardo Monzani* – Appointed Consul General in June 1920. Resided at 138 Domnească Street (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, M6, *Notes 1428/1922, 2959/1922, Italian Legation*).

*Gino Cechi* – Took over as Consul General in August 1924 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, C21, *Note 2090/1924, Italian Legation*).

*Aristide Pancaldi* – Appointed Vice Consul in February 1925 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, P8, *Note 330/1926, Italian Legation*).

*Giovanni Battista Dolfini* – Took over as Consul General in November 1927. Resided at 10 Lascăr Catargiu Street (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, D3, *Notes 2347/1927, 8/1928, Italian Legation*).

**Amedeo Mammalella** – Took over the mandate of Consul General in Galați in December 1933. Received his exequatur from the Royal House in March 1934. Served until 1938, when he was transferred to Sydney (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, M10, *Note 2178/1933, Italian Legation; Note 43317/1938, MOFA*).

**Luigi Nardi** – Took over as Consul General from A. Mammalella in July 1938. Lived in Galați at 106 Domnească Street (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, N4, *Notes 4028/1938, 2423/1938, Italian Legation*).

### **Sulina**

**Romano** – In February 1880, he completed his mission as Vice Consul in Sulina, being transferred to Newcastle.

**Ludovico Gigia** – Appointed Vice Consul in Sulina in February 1880, having previously held a similar position in Tunis. He ended his mandate in August 1880, when the Sulina office was closed, and its duties were transferred to the Consulate in Galați (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, G1, *Notes 28/1880 and 14000/1880, Consular General Agency of Italy*).

**Michelangelo Pettinato** – In 1926, served as acting head of the Italian consular agency in Sulina. In January 1927, he took over the leadership of this office with full powers (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, P11, *Notes 22/1927, 2423/1938, Italian Legation*).

### **Brăila**

**Manzani** – In the autumn of 1909, completed his mission as Vice Consul in Brăila.

**Giovanni Pascale** – Appointed Vice Consul in Brăila in November 1909 (AMFAR, Representatives, G4, *Notes 2698/1922; 131/1923, Italian Legation*). He was still carrying out consular duties in 1913 (Constantin Cristian, *Activitatea consulară la Brăila și Galați (1919 – 1940) – Consular activity in Brăila and Galați (1919 – 1940)*, Editura Pim, Iași, 2017, p. 64).

**Filippo da Passano** – Appointed Vice Consul in Brăila in December 1913 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, P3, *Note 97/1913, Italian Legation*).

**Serpi** – In 1917, completed his mission as Vice Consul in Brăila, being transferred to Iași (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, L1, *Note 86/1917, Italian Legation*).

**L. Arduni** – Served as Italy's consular representative in Brăila at the beginning of the interwar period (Constantin Cristian, *Consular activity*, p. 59).

**Adriano Gattorno** – Appointed Second Class Consul in Brăila in December 1922, when the office in this port was upgraded from a vice-consulate to a consulate. The new consulate's jurisdiction covered only Brăila County. Adriano Gattorno lived at 13 Bolintineanu Street (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, P2, *Note B2393/1909, Italian Legation*). He was a member of the Gattorno family, which owned the Gattorno S.A.R. shipping company, founded in 1857 — the oldest in the port of Brăila. This company represented the following shipping lines: Adriatica S.A. di Navigazione, Venice; Compagnia Genovese di Navigazione a Vapore, S.A., Genoa; Lloyd Triestino S.A. di Navigazione, Trieste; and Italia S.A. di Navigazione (Cristian Constantin, *Consular activity*, p. 59).

**Vittorio Seganti** – At the beginning of 1930, he completed his mission as Vice Consul in Brăila.

**Vincenzo Gulli** – Began his mandate as Vice Consul in Brăila in February 1930, replacing Vittorio Seganti. The Italian official lived at 19 Bolintineanu Street (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, G8, *Notes 337/1930, 947/1930, Italian Legation*).

**Sonino** – Temporarily headed the Brăila office in 1933, after V. Gulli's term ended (Cristian Constantin, *Consular activity*, p. 60).

**Belafrente** – Appointed head of the office in 1933 (Cristian Constantin, *Consular activity*, p. 60).

**Aristide Pancaldi** – Completed his mandate as Vice Consul in 1938.

**Giuseppe Toffoletto** – Appointed Vice Consul in Brăila in 1938, replacing Aristide Pancaldi. In 1940, he was still in office (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, T11, *Note 798/1938, Italian Legation*).

### **Constanța**

**Joseph Rosset** – In June 1904, he completed his mission as Vice Consul in Constanța.

**Ludovic de Marquis Centuriano** – Took over as Vice Consul in June 1904.

**Eduard Tozzi** – Appointed Consular Agent on 17 May 1907. His appointment coincided with the transformation of the Constanța vice-consulate into a consular agency (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, T7, *Note 794/1907, Italian Legation*). As noted above, in 1903, E. Tozzi was an agent of the Florio & Rubattino shipping company

**Ernesto Belzoni** – Served as Consular Agent in Constanța in 1917. His term ended due to his death.

**Ricardo Carisio** – A former corvette captain in the Royal Italian Navy, appointed Consular Agent in Constanța in September 1922 (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, C19, *Note 393/1922, Italian Legation*)

### **Giurgiu**

**Manfredi Fenici** – In June 1940, he headed the Italian Consular Agency in Giurgiu (AMFAR, Representatives, file 11, F7, *Note 2015/1940, Italian Legation*).

## **Conclusions**

During the period under review, Italy demonstrated a strong geopolitical and economic interest in the strategic value of Romanian ports along the Danube and the Black Sea, as evidenced by the operationalisation of the navigation–consular representation nexus. Thus, Romanian ports hosted extensive trade and navigation activities carried out by four major Italian companies - *Florio & Rubattino*, *Lloyd Triestino*, *SITMAR*, and *Navigazione Generale Italiana* - as well as a vast consular network. Between 1880 and 1940, Italy had 40 consular representatives in five Romanian ports: Galați, Brăila, Sulina, Constanța, and Giurgiu.

The largest number of these officials served at the port of Galați, where a Consulate General operated for long periods, supervising the offices in Sulina and Constanța.

The day-to-day operations of both shipping agencies and consular offices, as well as the dual role of some of their representatives, highlighted the direct link between Italy's economic and political levers of influence in Romanian port cities. There were instances in which agents of Italian shipping companies were appointed as consular representatives. Two examples include: Eduard Tozzi, an agent of the Florio & Rubattino company, who in 1906 was appointed Consular Agent in Constanța; Adriano Gattorno, a member of a well-known family representing all Italian shipping companies operating in Romanian ports, who in 1922 was Consul in Brăila.

Like other states that maintained consular representatives in Romanian ports, Italy took the opportunity to rotate consular officials within the same region to deepen their understanding of local realities. Thus, some consular representatives served multiple missions in different cities, such as Ludovic de Marquis Centuriano (Galați and Constanța) and Aristide Pancaldi (Galați and Brăila).

Most Italian Consuls General who served in Galați also held the position of Italy's representative to the European Commission of the Danube.

This rich landscape of Italy's economic and political representation in Romanian port cities illustrates the heightened interest of the authorities in Rome in the geostrategic potential of Romanian ports on the Danube and the Black Sea.

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