

French consular representatives in Romanian ports (1838–1934)**Ionel Constantin MITEA***"Dunărea de Jos" University of Galați**e-mail: ionel.mitea@ugal.ro***Abstract**

The competitive landscape of the great European powers, which vied for supremacy in Europe throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, saw France stand out with a particular interest in the economic and geopolitical potential of the Romanian Danube and the Black Sea. This was expressed both through the sustained presence of French shipping companies in our ports and through the operationalisation of a vast consular network in these locations. Between 1838 and 1934, France had in 6 Romanian ports (Galați, Brăila, Sulina, Călărași, Tulcea, and Constanța) a total of **73** consular officials. The hub of French consular representation was the port of Galați, where **48** French officials were recorded. This consular dynamic underscores France's concentrated efforts in information gathering, influence, and relations at the most crucial strategic points on the Danube and the Black Sea. The French political and economic interests in the ports of Galați and Brăila were evident throughout the entire studied period. Notably, the port of Brăila had French consular representatives from the second half of the 19th century until the beginning of World War I. The port of Constanța became a point of interest after Romania gained independence and Dobrogea returned within our borders.

Keywords: consular offices, ports, Danube, Black Sea, consular officials, geopolitical interests, France

Introduction

The aim of this study is to present the French consular dynamics in Romanian cities from 1838 to 1934.

The scientific novelty lies in highlighting France's growing interest in the geostrategic potential of the Danube and the Black Sea through the lens of operationalising a vast consular network in Romanian ports as a lever for political and economic influence.

Historiography – The primary historiographic source that provided substance to this study is a corpus of unpublished documents from the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, identified in the Collection "Foreign Representatives in Romania – Staff of Legations and Foreign Consulates." The data obtained from the evaluation of these documents were supplemented with information from *The Diplomatic Yearbooks of the French Empire and the French Republic*, covering the period 1858–1934, which are available in the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris. Relevant information on the subject was also obtained from consulting specialised works by authors such as Violeta Anca Epure, Cristian Constantin, and Ana Maria Cheșcu.

I. Historical landmarks of French interests in Romanian cities. Economic and Consular representation (1838–1934)

The 19th century marked a rich and dynamic era in European international relations, shaped by the competition among major state actors to exert influence in geostrategically important areas. The major European actors, established after the Congress of Vienna (1814), such as the British Empire (England), the Habsburg Empire (Austria), the Tsarist Empire (Russia), Prussia (Germany), the French Empire (France), and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey), competed for supremacy in Europe through various means, engaging in fierce rivalry to enhance or preserve their own strategic advantages. The geopolitical landscape of 19th-century Europe included tumultuous historical moments that were significant for later developments on the old continent: movements for secession and national liberation (Greece, Italy, Spain, 1821; Belgium, 1830; Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, 1878); the revolutionary year 1848; and military disputes between European powers, most often between the Ottoman and Tsarist Empires (1826, 1853, 1877).

The political and economic competition of the great powers in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century focused on geographical areas with strategic potential, one of which was the region of the Danube and the Black Sea. After 1829, the Danubian–Pontic region became an integral part of the Mediterranean world and a key player in the most significant developments on the European continent. (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *The dynamics of foreign consular representation in the Danube Maritime ports, an indicator of the regional geopolitical interest of the major power actors (1850 – 1939)*, Acta de Historia & Politica: Saeculum XXI, vol. 9 (2025), 3 - 5)

Between 1839 and 1876, there was a clear competition between the French, who supported maintaining the integrity of the Ottoman Empire—a position that protected their interests in the East—and the English, who monitored the route to India, while Austria set as its main objective the assertion of its hegemony in Eastern Europe. (Violeta-Anca EPURE, *În preajma Revoluției Pașoptiste (1835-1847): Consuli și voiajori francezi despre situația din Principatele Române. Ultima jumătate a celui de-al patrulea deceniu al veacului al XIX-lea în viziunea alogenilor francezi (I), On the eve of the pașoptiste revolution (1835-1847): French consuls and travelers about the situation in the Romanian Principalities. The last half of the fourth decade of the 19th century in the vision of French foreigners* Terra Sebus, Acta Musei Sabesiensis, 14/I, 2022, 162)

In this competitive landscape, France also stood out with a strong interest in the economic and geopolitical potential of the Romanian Danube and the Black Sea, expressed through both the sustained presence of French shipping companies in Romanian ports and the operationalisation of a vast consular network in these areas. France played an important role in the process of internationalising the Danube, a waterway through which Paris promoted its economic and political interests in the Romanian space. Economically, similar to Austria, France consolidated its presence in the commercial and maritime landscape of the Danube and the Black Sea through two powerful companies in the field: *Messageries Maritimes (MM)* and *Fraissinet*. During the Crimean War, MM provided part of the transportation for French troops to the theatres of operation in the Black Sea, remaining a genuine instrument of French economic influence until the 1870s.

Starting in 1856, this company showed particular interest in the resources of the Romanian Principalities. With the support of the French consul in Iași, Victor Place, it established a regular weekly service between Marseille, Istanbul, and Brăila, aimed at

developing French economic relations with this part of Europe and countering Austrian competition.

Between 1860 and 1870, MM successfully competed in the Maritime Danube ports with ships of the powerful Austrian company Lloyd, with French vessels carrying out the majority of import/export operations between Romania and France.

A report from the French Vice-Consulate in Brăila from 1861 noted that, of the 21 French-flagged vessels present in the port in the last quarter of 1860, 11 were MM steamships, which brought various goods and wines to Wallachia and loaded grain from Brăila. Beginning in July 1870, at the request of MM's leadership and the French consul Mellinet in Bucharest, the ships of this company were assimilated into warships, which granted them new fiscal advantages. (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *Companii de navigație la Gurile Dunării (1830-1939) - Navigation companies on the Danube's Mouths 1830 – 1939*, Ed. Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2022, 36-41)

The *Fraissinet* company also maintained a consistent presence in the Danube ports until World War I. With the consolidation of its position in Levantine ports, Fraissinet invested in extending the Marseille–Istanbul line to the ports of the Black Sea and Lower Danube. In 1880, a line to Brăila/Galați was established, with frequency varying depending on ship availability. A few years later, the company owned 25 ships, and the Danube service was operated by seven ships with weekly runs between Marseille and Brăila, facilitating import and export operations. The frequency of Fraissinet runs diminished starting in the 1890s due to a massive drop in freight charges. (Ibidem, 103 - 105)

The idea of establishing French consular representations in the Romanian Principalities emerged in 1782, driven by political and economic considerations related to regional trade. Politically, Napoleon influenced the establishment of such agencies I's plans to create a French Empire in the Mediterranean, weaken England's colonial power, and stop Russian expansion. (Ana – Maria Cheșcu, *Date privind activitatea consulară franceză la Galați în prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea - Information regarding French consular activity in Galați, first half of the 19th century*, DANUBIUS, vol. XXXII, 2014, 130 – 131)

The first forms of French consular representation in a Romanian port were recorded in 1803, when a certain Mechain was appointed “sub-commissioner for commercial relations” in Galați, under the authority of the agency in Iași. Mechain held this role until 1804, when he was replaced by Martin, who served only a few months. In 1809, Martin returned to Moldova, and in 1810, he relocated to Iași, retaining the title of vice-consul in Galați. In 1813, the French consular representative in Galați was A. Timoni. During his mandate, the French consular agency in Galați was elevated to the rank of Vice-Consulate. In 1827, the French consular agent in Galați was a certain Schmerber, and in 1834, Jules Sacchetti was appointed vice-consul in Galați, taking over from M. Ghimba. (Broadly in Ana – Maria Cheșcu, *op. cit.*; Broadly in, Constantin Cristian, *Activitatea consulară la Brăila și Galați (1919 – 1940) – Consular activity in Galați and Brăila (1919 – 1940)*, Iași, 2017)

The first French consular official in a Danube port recorded in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest was Y. B. Violier, appointed in Galați in 1838. (Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe - Fond – *Reprezentanți străini în România – Personalul Legațiunilor și Consulatelor străine*, dosar 9 (Franța) – The Archives of Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Collection – *Foreign Representatives in Romania – Staff of Legations and Foreign Consulates*, file 9, France, following AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9)

French consular offices in Romanian ports operated in tandem with the agencies of French shipping companies. Typically, the agents of the latter were appointed from among businessmen who had numerous connections and influence in the ports where they operated. This complementarity between the two forms of French representation was also evident in situations where agents of navigation companies were appointed to consular positions. A representative example is Marc Vuccino, the Fraissinet company agent in Brăila in 1892, who became the French consul in this port in 1909. (Ionel Constantin Mitea, *Navigation companies*, 71)

Next, we will present the dynamics of French consular representatives in Romanian ports during the reference period, along with a series of biographical and professional elements related to them.

II. French consular representatives in Romanian ports (1838–1934)

During the reference period, France established a consular network in Romanian port cities, comprising 73 officials active in six Romanian ports: Galați (48), Brăila (7), Sulina (1), Călărași (1), Tulcea (7), and Constanța (13).

PORT OF GALAȚI – This was a "hub" of French consular representation, recording between 1838 and 1932 the presence of 48 French consular officials, including:

- **Y. B. Viollier (1838)** – A French merchant settled in Galați, who was appointed on June 24, 1838, as the consular agent of France in this port. His appointment was proposed by the French Consulate in Iași. On August 26, 1840, he was promoted to vice-consul, serving in this capacity until 1841. During his mandate, the jurisdiction of the French consular office in Galați also included Brăila County. (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. V2, V3 Notes French Consulate of Iassy 1265/1838, 167/1840*)
- **Louis Castaing (1838)** – In 1838, he was the dragoman of the French vice-consulate in Galați. In April 1841 and May 1843, he served as the chancellor of the consular office in Iași, and in 1878, he became vice-consul in that city. (*Anuarul diplomatic al Republicii Franceze – 1879, Diplomatic Yearbook of French Republic - Annuaire diplomatique de la République Française pour 1879 – (following – Republic Yearbook)*, 123)
- **Victor Castaing (1841)** – In 1841, he was secretary and dragoman of the Galați office, and in 1852, he served as interpreter and chancellor of this office. In 1854, he undertook a diplomatic mission to Sofia, Bulgaria. In 1863, he was the chancellor of the French consular office in Galați. On November 13, 1863, he assumed the role of interim head of the office, holding this position until May 1865. In 1869, he headed the chancellery of the French General Consulate in Bucharest. (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. C1, Note of County Covurlui, 12779/1863; Republic Yearbook 1879, 123*)
- **Duclos (1852)** – On April 11, 1846, he was appointed vice-consul in Galați, after having served in a similar capacity in Iași (Ana – Maria Cheșcu, *op. cit.*, 144). In August 1852, he ended his mission in Galați and was appointed to the same position at the consular office in Brăila. (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. G2, Note French Consulate Iassy 219/1852*)
- **Gardera (1852)** – He was appointed vice-consul in Galați in August 1852, replacing Duclos (*Ibidem*). He concluded his mission in Galați in 1854 or 1855 and was

assigned to specific tasks in Kronstadt and Braşov (Ana – Maria Cheşcu, *op. cit.*, 150).

- **Lemont (1855)** – Appointed as interim head of the Galaţi office on February 9, 1855, with the rank of vice-consul, due to the appointed official, one Place, being unable to assume his duties. He served as acting head until October 1855 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. L3, Note 45/1855, French Consulate Iassy*).
- **A. de Brossard (1855)** – Held the noble title of count and was appointed consul in Galaţi in October 1855. His mandate ended in July 1857 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. B3, Note 193/1855, French Consulate Iassy*).
- **François Joseph Félix Steyert (1857)** – Born in 1809 and died in 1859. He served as consul in Galaţi from June 1857 to September 1859 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. S3, Note of General Consulate of France, July 1857; Anuarul diplomatic al Imperiului Francez (1860) - Annuaire diplomatique de l'Empire français pour l'année - 1860 - Diplomatic Yearbook of French Empire (following, Empire Diplomatic Year Book), 229*).
- **Edouard Louis Bouillat (1859)** – Appointed consul in Galaţi in September 1859, replacing F. Steyert. He ended his mission in November 1860. He held a law degree and completed consular courses in 1853. His professional path also included missions in New York (1854), London (1856), and Milan (1869). In 1873, he became Consul General of France in Antwerp (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. B5, Note General Consulate of France, september 1859; Anuar Republica 1879, 119*).
- **L. Vermot (1860)** – Appointed consul in Galaţi on November 10, 1860, serving until November 13, 1863 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. V5, Note 664/1860, General Consulate of France*).
- **Gaetan Partiot (1863)** – Appointed consul in Galaţi in July 1863. He held a law degree and completed consular courses in 1857. He later served in Livorno and Florence (1861), and after Romania, was posted in Carthage (1865), Valencia (1866), Málaga (1869), and Milan (1873) (Empire Diplomatic Yearbook, 1864, p. 47).
- **Engelhardt (1865)** – In 1865, he was consul in Galaţi and represented France in the European Commission of the Danube (*Empire Diplomatic Yearbook - 1865, 48*).
- **Gorsse (1865)** – Began his mission as consul in Galaţi in 1865. In April 1868, he ended his tenure (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. B1, Note 220/1868, General Consulate of France; Empire Diplomatic Yearbook - 1865, 48*).
- **Henri Jean Marie Boyard (1868)** – Appointed consul in Galaţi in April 1868, replacing Gorsse. His mandate ended on October 27, 1873. He held a law degree and completed consular courses in 1863. His external missions included Barcelona (183), Bucharest (1863), and St. Petersburg (1873) (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. B1, Note 220/1868, General Consulate of France; Republic Yearbook - 1879, p. 121*).
- **Jules Alexandre Théodore Degrande (1869)** – In December 1869, he was appointed chancellor of the consular office in Galaţi. Prior to this assignment, he had undertaken a mission in Buenos Aires (1867). In 1875, he served as chancellor in Rio de Janeiro, and in November 1878, in Amsterdam (Empire Diplomatic Yearbook, 1870, p. 46; Republic Year Book, 1879, 132).

- **Axel Duboul (1873)** – On October 27, 1873, he replaced H. Boyard, who had been transferred to Cagliari, Italy. His mandate ended on March 22, 1878 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. D6, Note 1292/1873, General Consulate of France*)
- **Charles François Noël Champoiseau (1874)** – Appointed consul in Galați in October 1874. He was a diplomat with extensive consular experience, with missions including: Redoute-Kaleh (1855), Philippopoli (1857), Adrianople (1862), Janina (1865), Bilbao (1873), Messina (1878) (*Republic Year Book 1875 – 1876, p. 49; Republic Year Book - 1879, p. 125*).
- **Émile Boyssset (1875)** – In 1875, he was chancellor of the Galați office. He had previously held a similar post in Alexandria, Egypt. In 1877, he was vice-consul in Philippopoli, and in 1878 he held the same position in Varna (*Republic Year Book 1875 – 1876, p. 49; Republic Year Book 1879, p. 121*).
- **Jules Ferdinand Coste (1877)** – In 1877, he was chancellor of the Galați office. He was appointed consul in March 1882, replacing George Laporte. He ended his mission in August 1882, being appointed to a similar position in Cagliari. He held degrees in literature and law, and his consular career included missions to London (1872), Port Said and Newcastle (1873) (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. C1, Notes 79/1882 și 285/1882, French Legation; Republic Year Book 1877, p. 51; Republic Year Book 1879, p. 129*).
- **Louis Albert Marie Paul de Laigue (1878)** – Appointed consul in Galați on March 22, 1878. His mandate ended on May 24, 1880. He held a law degree and completed specialized consular studies in 1871. He was previously sent as a consular attaché to Naples and had temporarily led the French office in Carthage before taking over in Galați (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. L2, Note 124/1878, General Consulate of France; Republic Year Book 1879, p. 151*)
- **Constantin Othon (1878)** – Born on April 12, 1878. In 1865, he was active in the chancellery of the Alexandria office in Egypt. In November 1878, he was chancellor in Galați, and the following year he held the same post in Bulgaria. In 1880, he was dragoman-chancellor in Port Said (*Republic Year Book 1879, p. 165; Republic Year Book 1880, p. 189*).
- **Jules Constant Jean de Roujoux (1878)** – Born on July 13, 1842. In June 1871, he worked in the chancellery in Iași, and in December 1878 in Galați (*Republic Year Book 1880, p. 200*).
- **Armand Désiré Bréjard (1879)** – Born on July 17, 1848. In April 1879, he was chancellor in Galați, having previously served at the Consulate in Cairo (1873). In 1880, he was assigned to Manila (*Ibidem, p. 142*)
- **Arsène Désiré Céleste Mine (1879)** – Appointed chancellor in October 1879 in Galați, and in 1882 he was transferred to the same position in Bucharest. In December 1889, he returned to Galați. He was born on November 9, 1845 (*Republic Year Book 1890, p. 205*).
- **Victor Colin (1880)** – In April 1880, he was chancellor in Galați (*Republic Year Book 1880, p. 149*).
- **Charles Léon de Servins Héricourt (1880)** – Held the noble title of count. In May 1880, he replaced consul de Laigue, who had been designated for a similar position in Malaga, Spain. His mission ended in January 1881. Born on January 7, 1843, he held a law degree and completed consular courses in 1873. He was later assigned to Constantinople (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. H1, Note 99/1880, French Legation; Republic Year Book 1880, p. 170*).

- **George Laporte (1881)** – On January 16, 1881, he took over from Count de Héricourt and served until March 2, 1882. Born on February 17, 1839, his diplomatic and consular career included: Alexandria chancellery (1869), vice-consul in Ismailia and Suez (1871–1875), vice-consul in Suez (1877), and acting head of the Port Said office (1878–1879) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. L2, Note 6/1881, *French Legation*; *Republic Year Book 1881*, p. 179).
- **Jean Pierre Camille de Pommayrac (1882)** – On March 10, 1882, he was chancellor in Galați. Previously held a similar position in Tunis. Born on June 7, 1856 (*Republic Year Book 1882*, p. 199).
- **Gaston Wiet (1882)** – Took over as consul in Galați in August 1882, serving until November 1883 AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez V1, Note 285/1882, *French Legation*, Reprez. V2, Note 222/1885, *French Legation*, Telegram of MOFA 266/1900). He returned to this position in May 1885 and remained until February 10, 1900, when he passed away. Born on January 23, 1846 in Bahia, Brazil. He was married with two children. Before his presence in Romania, he undertook missions in Scutari, Albania (1863), Suez (1865), Bosnia (1873), Port Said (1877), and Janina (1880) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez V2, Nota 222/1885, *French Legation*, MOFA Telegram 266/1900; Note 1112/1900, *Prefecture of Covurlui*; *Republic Year Book 1883*, p. 220).
- **Valérien Jean Bogusz (1882)** – In July 1882, he was chancellor in Galați. Born on November 13, 1841. Before Galați, he had held similar posts in Bucharest in 1863 and 1876 (*Republic Year Book 1883*, p. 142).
- **Marie Camille Georges Carra de Vaux (1883)** – Took over as consul in Galați in November 1883, holding the position until May 1885 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. C2, Nota 987/1883, *French Legation*)
- **Jacques Florimond Paul d'Avesnes (1884)** – On July 15, 1884, he was appointed chancellor in Galați. Born on September 18, 1849. Before this, he had held similar missions in Livorno (1875), Alicante (1877), Buenos Aires (1879), and Bombay (1881) (*Republic Year Book 1884*, p. 132).
- **Pierre Hippolyte Gues (1885)** – In June 1885, he was appointed chancellor in Galați. Born on May 18, 1847. Before his presence in Romania, he held similar positions in Athens (1879) and Syra (1884) (*Republic Year Book 1885*, p. 172).
- **Charles Numa Autigeon (1888)** – Born on December 29, 1846. Appointed chancellor in Galați in January 1888. Previously served in Panama (1880), Barcelona (1883), Syra (1885), and Palma (1886) (*Republic Year Book 1886*, p. 135).
- **Lucien Abel de Malaspina (1895)** – Appointed chancellor in Galați in May 1895. Born on January 5, 1852. His first foreign mission was in Frankfurt in 1882, followed by assignments in Naples (1885), Cairo (1887), Puerto Rico (1889), and Corfu (1891) (*Republic Year Book 1895*, p. 210).
- **Stanislas de Buyer (1897)** – In July 1897, appointed chancellor in Galați. Born March 1, 1857. His first mission was in Turin (1883). Before Galați, he had held similar positions in Geneva (1884, 1895), Bern (1886), and Tunis (1894) (*Republic Year Book 1897*, p. 155).
- **Louis Jean Paul Heritte (1898)** – Appointed vice-consul and chancellor in Galați in December 1898. Born on April 17, 1864. He had a rich diplomatic and consular career, with missions in St. Petersburg (1888), Leipzig (1889), Cairo and Port Said

(1892), London (1894), New Jersey (1895), and Shanghai (1896) (*Republic Year Book 1899*, p. 207).

- **Joseph Pollio (1900)** – Took over as consul in Galați in June 1900. His consular jurisdiction included cities in Moldova, Dobrogea, and Brăila County. Born on October 21, 1852. He had an extensive consular career, with missions in Fiume (1880), Figueras (1882), Almería (1883), Alicante (1886), Corfu (1893), and Honolulu (1898) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. P3, Notes 611/1900, 915/1900, *French Legation, Republic Year Book 1902*, p. 257).
- **Joseph Louis Endes Belin (1905)** – After serving as consul in La Paz, Bolivia, he was appointed to the Galați office in July 1905, replacing J. Pollio. He ended his mandate in October 1906, then became Consul General in Seoul. Born on July 7, 1856, he also had a rich diplomatic and consular background with missions in Genoa (1877), Bilbao (1879), Livorno (1881), Rome (1882), Odessa (1883), Bogotá (1885), Rio de Janeiro (1890), St. Petersburg (1892), Batavia (1897), and La Paz (1900) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. B7, Notes 11517/1905, 1065/1906 *French Legation, Republic Year Book 1914*, p. 166).
- **Samuel Alfred Melon (1906)** – Appointed in October 1906 to replace J. L. E. Belin. Ended his mandate in April 1908. Born on December 9, 1848, he had a broad consular career, including missions in Lisbon (1879), Breslau (1880), Düsseldorf (1883), Warsaw (1885), St. Petersburg (1892), Bucharest (1892), and Iași (1905) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. M13, Notes 1065/1906, 30/1908, *French Legation; Republic Year Book 1907*, p. 240).
- **Henri Arnould (1908)** – Former consul in Damascus, he took over from S. A. Melon in April 1908 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. M13, A3, Notes 30/1908, 35/1908 *French Legation*).
- **Joseph René Pierre Daubrée (1914)** – Born on May 1, 1875, and held a degree in Oriental languages. Appointed head of the Vice-Consulate in Galați in February 1914. Previously, he served in Iași (1909) and Puerto Rico (1909). In 1920, he was consul in Bucharest (*Republic Year Book 1921*, p. 195).
- **Charles Duchesne (1921)** – Appointed consul in February 1921. At that time, the consular jurisdiction of the French office in Galați included Moldova, Bukovina, Bessarabia, and the counties of Brăila and Tulcea (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. D16, Note 5270/1921, *French Legation, Extras M. Of. 268/1921*).
- **Honoré Marius Joseph Boux (1922)** – Appointed head of the French office in Galați on March 16, 1922. Ended his mandate in June 1924. He was to be replaced by M. Neton, former consul in Hamburg, who, however, never assumed the post in Galați (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. R3, Nota 11266/1922, *French Legation; Report 212/1925 Prefecture of Covurului*).
- **Romeo (1925)** – Beginning in June 1924, following H. M. J. Raux's departure, he served as interim head of the Galați office. In January 1925, he was still performing these duties (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. R3, Report 212/1925 *Prefecture of Covurului*).
- **Gabriel Gaston Philippe Mouille (1925)** – In February 1925, he took over leadership of the Galați office, also serving as a delegate to the European Commission of the Danube. Born on September 5, 1877, he held degrees in law and Oriental languages. He had a very extensive diplomatic and consular career, with missions in Smyrna (1903), Rhodes (1905), Tangier (1906), Damascus (1908),

Jerusalem (1911), Mazagan (1912), Bucharest (1915), and Cluj (1920) (*Republic Year Book 1926*, p. 297).

- **Eugène Emanuelli (1930)** – Appointed chancellor in Galați in April 1930. Previously served in Vienna (1920), La Paz (1927), and São Paulo (1930) (*Republic Year Book 1931*, p. 264).
- **Charles Justin Gaston Raymond Joseph Delpéch de Frayssinet (1932)** – Appointed chancellor in Galați in December 1932. Born on April 23, 1874. He began his consular career in 1899 as temporary head of the consular agency in Mozambique. Subsequent missions included Bern (1903), Glasgow (1909), London (1917), Lisbon (1918), Berlin (1930) (*Republic Year Book 1933*, p. 254).

PORT OF BRĂILA – Recorded French consular activity between 1852 and 1914, with the presence of 7 officials:

- **Duclos** – In August 1852, he concluded his vice-consular mission in Galați and was appointed to the same position at the consular office in Brăila. His mission ended in 1858 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. G2, Note French Consulate in Iassy 219/1852).
- **Maurin Bie (1858)** – After completing a consular mission in Kiel, Denmark, he was appointed vice-consul in February 1858, replacing Duclos. His mandate ended on July 29, 1868 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. M5, Note 98/1858, French Diplomatic Agency).
- **Malavasy (1868)** – Representative of the Messageries Maritimes shipping company in Brăila. Between 1868–1870 (in the absence of Maurin Bie from post), he ensured the interim leadership of the Brăila office. In October 1870, he was appointed consular agent of France in Brăila, performing specific duties until November 1871 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. M2, M3, Notes 444/1868, 1206/1870 Diplomatic Agency of France).
- **Rodocanachi (1872)** – In 1872, he was consular agent in Brăila (*Republic Year Book 1872 – 1873*, p. 48).
- **Boscoff (1884)** – In 1884, he was consular agent in Brăila (*Republic Year Book 1884*, p. 39).
- **Marc Vuccino (1909)** – Representative of the French shipping company Fraissinet, he was appointed consular agent in Brăila in December 1909 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. V10, Note 2/1909, French Legation).
- **Jacques Edouard Nicolas Vuccino (1914)** – In May 1914, he was appointed consular agent of France in Brăila. In 1921, he held the same position, as well as that of representative of the Fraissinet company (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. V10, Note 62/1914, French Legation, Note 13897/1921, Ministry of Interior).

PORT OF SULINA – The consulted consular sources indicated the presence of a French consular official in Sulina in 1860: **Count De Louvieres**, who held the noble title of count and was appointed consular agent in 1860 (*Empire Year Book 1860*, p. 46).

PORT OF CĂLĂRAȘI – Similar to Sulina, in 1873, Călărași became a point of political interest for France. On April 24, 1873, **Prosper Durand** was appointed consular agent by Paris (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. D5, Note 1057/1873, French Legation).

PORT OF TULCEA – Registered French political interest between 1866 and 1886, during which 3 French consular officials served:

- **Aimé Adrien Langlais (1866)** – Held a law degree and was appointed vice-consul in Tulcea starting in 1866. He completed his mission in January 1879, then was

appointed to a similar position in Philippopoli. Prior to his appointment in Tulcea, he had served in Mexico (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. C5, Note 589/1879, *Prefecture of Tulcea*; *Empire Year Book 1869*, p. 45; *Republic Year Book 1879*, p. 152).

- **Léon Arnold Chanard de la Chaume (1879)** – Appointed vice-consul in Tulcea at the beginning of 1879, he held this position until March 1882. At that time, the French consular office also had jurisdiction over Sulina. In 1881, the prefect of Tulcea County filed a complaint regarding difficult communication and cooperation with the French official. In a note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French Legation in Bucharest denied such claims. Before his presence in Romania, he had served in Neuchâtel and Zurich (1874) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. C5, Notes 589/1879, 409/1881, *Prefecture of Tulcea*, Note French Legation 5004/1881; *Republic Year Book 1879*, p. 151).
- **Casimir Decis (1886)** – In May 1886, he was appointed consular agent in Tulcea (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. D5, Note French Legation May 1886).

PORT OF CONSTANȚA – French political interest in the geopolitical potential of the port of Constanța became evident after Romania gained independence and Dobrogea was returned to its borders. Between 1879 and 1934, Constanța hosted 13 French consular representatives, as follows:

- **Senac (1879)** – Appointed consular agent on May 12, 1879. He later became vice-consul and carried out his duties until March 14, 1882 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. S6, Nota 213/1879, *French Legation*)
- **Jules Alexandre Théodore Degrande (1882)** – Took over the leadership of the Constanța office as vice-consul in March 1882. He held the noble title of chevalier. At that time, the Constanța office also assumed the responsibilities of the Tulcea office, which had been dissolved (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. D3, Nota 107.1882, *French Legation*) As previously noted, he had also served at the Galați office in 1869.
- **Alexandre Stoltz (1884)** – Held the noble title of baron and assumed leadership of the Constanța office as vice-consul in March 1884 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. S1, Nota 121/1884, *French Legation*).
- **Dominique François Ordioni (1886)** – Appointed consul in Constanța in September 1886, he served until March 1892. Born on March 22, 1850. Between 1878–1882, he served as mayor of the city of Corte. Prior to his mission in Constanța, he held posts in the Dardanelles (1882) and Burgas (1886) (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. O2, Note 13882/1886, *French Legation*; *Republic Year Book 1889*, p.209).
- **Léon Iuliu Marcellin Delage (1892)** – Replaced D. Ordioni in March 1892. Held an 18-year mandate, ending in 1910. Born on May 23, 1851, and held a law degree. His first foreign mission was to Newcastle in 1877 (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. D8, Note 4136/1892, *French Legation*; *Republic Year Book 1894*, p. 173).
- **De Francqueville (1910)** – Former consul in Benghazi, he was appointed to the same position in Constanța in September 1910, replacing M. Delage. He ended his mission the following year, then assumed a similar post in Pará, Brazil (AMFAR - *Representatives*, file 9/Reprez. F3, Notes 76/1910, 38/1911 *French Legation*).
- **M. Lucciardi (1911)** – Former vice-consul of France in Tetouan, Morocco. He took over Francqueville's duties in July 1911, holding the rank of vice-consul. He was

transferred to Palma, Spain, in the summer of the following year (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. L6, Notes 38/1911, 72/1912 French Legation*).

- **Félix Charles Jean de Saint-Sauveur (1912)** – Took over Lucciardi's post in August 1912 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. S7, Note 72/1912, French Legation*).
- **Anatole Magrin (1920)** – Appointed consular agent in Constanța at the end of 1920. In November 1928, his son, Martial Magrin, introduced himself to local authorities as the consular representative of France, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs denied this claim (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. M16, Note MOFA 432/1921*).
- **Marie Joseph François Guiderdoni (1929)** – Appointed consul in Constanța on January 30, 1929. Born on March 19, 1878, and held a law degree. Prior to his Constanța mission, he held postings in London (1907), Milan (1909 and 1916), and Porto (1912) (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. G11, Exequatur Royal House no. 21258/1929; Republic Year Book 1930, p. 276*).
- **Tristan Perier de Larsan (1932)** – Appointed consul in 1932 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. L14, Note 99/1932 French Legation*).
- **M. Torres (1934)** – Temporarily led the Constanța office for a short time following the departure of Tristan de Larsan (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. T8, Note 189/1934, French Legation*).
- **Charles Albert Henri Edouard Tamburini (1934)** – After completing a mission in Rhodes, Greece, he assumed the role of consul in Constanța in August 1934 (AMFAR - *Representatives, file 9/Reprez. T8, Note 189/1934, French Legation*).

Conclusions

During the reference period, France displayed significant geopolitical interest in the strategic potential of Romanian port cities, where it established a vast consular network staffed by 73 officials—48 of whom served in the port of Galați. The presence of French consular officials in the ports of Brăila, Galați, Tulcea, and Constanța highlights a concentration of France's efforts in gathering information, exerting influence, and establishing diplomatic relationships at the most important strategic points on the Danube and the Black Sea. France's political and economic interest in the port of Galați was present throughout the studied period, while the port of Brăila hosted consular representatives from Paris from the second half of the 19th century until the beginning of the First World War. The port of Constanța became a point of interest after Romania's independence and the return of Dobrogea to Romanian territory. We can observe that some of the officials mentioned carried out consular missions in multiple Romanian cities, following the principle of personnel rotation within the same state to ensure better knowledge of local realities. Among those who served in multiple Romanian cities were: Louis Castaing (Iași, Galați), Victor Castaing (Galați, Bucharest), Duclos (Galați, Brăila), Samuel Alfred Melon (Galați, Bucharest, Iași), Jules Alexandre Théodore Degrande (Galați, Constanța). Some French consular officials in Galați also served as France's representatives in the European Commission of the Danube: Engelhardt (1865), Gabriel Gaston Philippe Mouille (1925). We also note French consular officials who held particularly long mandates in the cities covered in this study: Aimé Adrien Langlais, who served a 13-year mandate in Tulcea (1866–1879), and Léon Iuliu Marcellin Delage, who served for 18 years in Constanța (1892–1910). From the analysis of the biographical and professional elements of the French consular officials mentioned in this study, we can highlight the following general

characteristics: they were university graduates; some held noble titles (A. de Brossard, Alexandre Stoltz, Charles Léon de Servins Héricourt, De Louvieres); the majority had extensive experience in global diplomatic spaces, with numerous prior missions—both before their presence in Romania and after completing their mandates here (e.g., Edouard Louis Bouillat, Gaetan Partiot, Charles François Noël Champoiseau, Marie Joseph François Guiderdoni). The direct connection between the French shipping companies operating in Romanian ports and Paris's consular representations is evidenced by the appointment of Messageries Maritimes and Fraissinet company agents to consular positions: Malavasy (1868, Brăila), representative of Messageries Maritimes in Brăila; Marc Vuccino (1909, Brăila), representative of Fraissinet since 1892; Jacques Édouard Nicolas Vuccino (1914, Brăila), who simultaneously held the positions of French consular agent and Fraissinet company representative. This complex picture of French consular representation in Romanian ports highlights France's deepening interest in the geopolitical potential of the Danubian–Pontic space.

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