

DISCUSSION NOTE

On January 15 this year, comrade George Macovescu had a meeting with V.V. Kuznetsov, first assistant of the minister of foreign affairs of the USSR, at the latter's request, at the residence of the Romanian delegation. Comrades Gheorghe Badrus and M. Chirila also took part in the meeting.

The official translator was Teofil Ionescu, secretary I of the Embassy of SR Romania at Moscow.

After extending his congratulations to comrade George Macovescu on the occasion of the latter's appointment to the position of great responsibility of minister of foreign affairs, V.V. Kuznetsov pointed out that he wished to put forward – confidentially – a number of issues related to the continuation of the preparatory works for the General European Conference.

It was apparent from the findings of the Soviet side that, with a view to raising new obstacles in the way of the successful preparation and convening of the Conference, the Western countries were going to insist – unjustifiably much – on the drawing up of draft mandates as detailed as possible for the commissions to be set up and function in the second stage of the Conference.

Taking into account the experience gained vis-à-vis such a foot-dragging tactics adopted by the Western countries on the occasion of other talks held or proposed to take place, the Soviet side drew up a draft document of confidential character bearing the title "Draft tasks for the commissions of the General European Conference", which it also conveyed to Romania a few days ago. V.V. Kuznetsov asserted again on this occasion that the reason behind the drawing up of this document was the wish of the Soviet side to remove the obstacles that could appear over the course of the preparations for the Conference. Its content originates in the USSR's conception that the mandates for the commissions must be concise, and outline the general framework of the objectives pursued, along with the issues that are to form the object of the negotiations.

The first assistant of the Soviet minister went on to say that, with a view to fostering this position of the USSR, on the occasion of the recent meeting between L.I. Brezhnev and Georges Pompidou this draft document was handed over to the French side, which – in their turn – promised to study it and let the Soviet side know their opinions through the diplomatic channel; the Soviet side takes the view that, in the long run, France – one of the Western countries that insists to the greatest extent on the drawing up of the commission mandates in the minutest detail, being thus in a position to influence the other mentioned (?) states as well – will state its stance in this field in a more nuanced manner.

Taking into consideration the fact that these issues still have a confidential character, the Soviet side asks the Romanian side not to express considerations on the relevant document within the framework of the present conference since they could allow the premature diffusion of the Soviet initiative and would consequently permit the Western states to adopt appropriate measures. There

will be other occasions when these proposals, among which the future consultations at the end of January this year, will be discussed on a bilateral basis when either A. Kovalev – assistant of the minister of foreign affairs – comes to Bucharest or a comrade of the Romanian side comes to Moscow.

In his reply, comrade George Macovescu pointed out that – in the light of the information previously received from the Soviet side – the second objective of the current conference is to conduct an exchange of opinions in connection with taking further the preparatory works at Helsinki.

In our opinion, the following stage is of paramount importance for achieving decisive progress towards winding up the preparatory works and the convening of the Conference; the Romanian side is going to set forth its standpoints on the issues related to the fulfilling of this objective and, in this context, we have no intentions to make any considerations regarding the issues comrade V.V. Kuznetsov referred to. In fact, as it has already been mentioned, bilateral consultations are soon going to take place at Bucharest, within whose framework the Soviet draft documents handed over by the Soviet side during November, 1972, which are to be adopted at the General European Conference, as well as the recent mandate proposals for the commissions, will be discussed.

It goes without saying that the issue of the commission mandates is of a distinct importance from the point of view of the Conference outcomes we are expecting. Comrade George Macovescu expressed, as a personal opinion, the view that – in the current stage of the Helsinki reunion – the issue of the detailed drawing up of these mandates will not be raised yet, so much so as neither the setting up of the commissions themselves has been so far decided; such a decision obviously implies the previous reaching of a consensus as regards the formulation of an agenda. The decision relating to the final form of the commission mandates cannot in fact be the task of the current preparatory reunion at Helsinki; the final decision on this issue is to be made, naturally, by the Conference, more precisely within the framework of the latter's first stage.

Sharing the opinions expressed by comrade George Macovescu, V.V. Kuznetsov exemplified his previous assertions by emphasizing the necessity for the commission mandates to include the principles, which – he said – both the USSR and Romania proclaim in the various communiqués issued in relation to the relationships between states. He also took the view that this conference will be a significant contribution to the fruitful collaboration of the socialist countries in the building of the European security system.

Comrade George Macovescu, in its turn, has pointed out that the Romanian delegation is taking part in this conference animated by the wish to contribute, along with the other brotherly socialist countries, to the identification of the practical ways of achieving the objective of security on the continent.

The interview lasted for about forty minutes.

[Translated by Viorel Buta]