

# Romania and the first cracks in the implementation of the Hitler-Stalin pact of 1940: Germany's guarantees granted to Romania at the Vienna Award and the Danube issue

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## Abstract

*The non-aggression treaty signed on 23 August 1939 between Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and communist leader Stalin aiming at dividing the spheres of influence in the geopolitical space located between Germany and the USSR from the Baltic to the Danube, is the act which led to the outbreak of World War II. Germany is nowadays assuming full responsibility for Hitler's outbreak of war, while the Russian or the Anglo-American historiographies are still reluctant to associate Stalin to Hitler. For this reason, today, more than 70 years after its signing by J. von Ribbentrop and V.M. Molotov, would be more appropriate that the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty be called the Hitler-Stalin Pact. Romania is the place where the first cracks in the implementation of this Pact occurred. After the ultimatum addressed to the Moscow government in Bucharest on 28 June 1940 and the occupation by force of Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina and Hertza, the USSR had not been invited at the German-Italian arbitration in Vienna on 30 August 1940, despite its claims on southern Bukovina. After the surrender of Northern Transylvania to Hungary and of Southern Dobrogea to Bulgaria, Germany and Italy granted a territorial guarantee to Romania, which deeply disturbed the USSR. This was the first crack in the covenant. Following the occupation of Austria by Germany on 5 April 1938, the latter considered the Danube a German river. At the Danube Conference in Vienna (5-12 September 1940), Germany abolished the International Danube Commission (IDC) and set up a Council of Fluvial Danube. Following the occupation of Bessarabia, the Soviet Union became riparian to the Danube and declared that it was interested in all matters concerning the Danube. It supported the abolition of IDC, but it additionally proposed the abolishing of the European Commission the Danube (CED) and the creation of a unique Danube Commission to cover the whole river, which was not agreed by Germany. This will produce a second crack in the Hitler-Stalin Pact.*

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