

# The Role and Contribution of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Constanța to the Economic and Social Development of Dobrudja Region

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## Abstract

*The Chambers of Commerce and Industry are organizations of businesspeople meant to represent and defend the interests of the entrepreneurs in a city, an area or a country. They are of considerable age and are found in almost every country of the world.*

*In Constanța (Romania), the first Chamber of Commerce of the historical region Dobrudja was founded in 1880 and was operational until 1949, when all the territorial Chambers in Romania were dissolved by the communist regime. Later, after the change of political regime, in 1990, the Chamber was re-established, currently being known as Constanța Chamber of Commerce.*

*This paper highlights a series of important events and contributions of this organization to the economic and social development of Dobrudja region.*

*The analysis of a considerable number of documents from the archives made it possible to highlight some very interesting information regarding the activity of Constanța's "old" Chamber of Commerce.*

**Key words:** Chamber of Commerce and Industry, contribution, economic development, Dobrudja Region, Constanța city

**J.E.L. classification:** O1, O12, R11

## 1. Introduction

The Chambers of Commerce are public interest organizations of considerable age. Thus, the first Chamber of Commerce in the world was established in Marseilles in 1599, in order to organize the protection of French merchant ships against the pirates in the Mediterranean Sea. Starting from 1600, King Henry IV officially recognized the new organization, which he instructed "to defend the trade from any damage and restore it to its splendor". Over the centuries, copying the model of Marseilles, other French cities and also from other countries have created similar organizations (Provence tourism, 2017).

In the modern period, in France, the current Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris has been established under Napoleon I, in 1805. The first United States Chamber of Commerce was founded in New York in 1768, while the United States Chamber of Commerce was founded later, in 1912.

The Chambers of Commerce are associations or networks of associations of businesspeople, with the main purpose of representing, defending and promoting the interests of their members. They exist in most countries of the world, in most cases their name being Chambers of Commerce and Industry, sometimes other fields of activity being added to the name (agriculture, navigation, tourism, crafts, etc.). The legislation regarding the Chambers of Commerce differs from country to country, but in principle there are two broad categories: public law organizations, which regulate the obligation of all categories of entrepreneurs to be members of the chamber and private law organizations, in which case Chamber membership is optional for entrepreneurs.

In Romania, these institutions were settled at the exact same time when modern Romania was formed. The law regarding the organization of the Chambers of Commerce in the Romanian Principalities has been voted and promulgated on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 1864. Based on this law, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Bucharest - the first in the Romanian Principalities, became operational in 1868. In Transylvania, the Chambers were already operating, at the end of the 19th century, in Arad, Braşov, Cluj, Oradea, Târgu Mureş and Timişoara, the ones in Braşov, Cluj and Timişoara being established since 1850.

In the Dobrudja region, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established only in 1880 (just two years after the end of the War of Independence, which made possible the return of Dobrudja to the Romanian Principalities), having the following name: Chamber of Commerce of the XV Constituency, comprising the counties of Constanţa and Tulcea, with the headquarters in Constanţa. It was established by the Journals of the Council of Ministers no. 9 and 10, of August 9, 1880, being endorsed by royal decrees no. 2115 and 2117 of the same year.

If we consider that, in London, the first Chamber of Commerce appeared only in 1882, then we can notice the fact that the similar institution in Constanţa is two years older than the one in London (Jugănar et al., 2015b, pp.115-116).

From the very beginning of their operation, the Chambers of Commerce in our country were conceived by the legislator as an important dialogue partner with the state bodies. Thus, in accordance with the provisions of Law no. 1225 of 1864, the Chambers had the right to present to the government, on their own initiative, their point of view regarding the interests of the merchants and industrialists in their constituency (Jugănar et al., 2010, p. 5).

The study of numerous bibliographic sources, found in archives, has allowed the identification of some important actions and activities, carried out by the Chamber of Commerce of Constanţa, in order to develop the economic and social region of Dobrudja, from 1880 until 1949, when the Chamber was dissolved.

## 2. Literature review

This paper presents some important landmarks regarding the emergence and development of the activity of the first Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the historical region Dobrudja, in Romania, 140 years after its creation. Dissolved by the communist regime, in 1949, together with the other territorial chambers of commerce in Romania, the Chamber of Constanţa would be re-established, in 1990, after the change of the political regime.

This double anniversary (140 years since the establishment of the first Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Constanţa and 30 years since its re-establishment) warrants the highlight of some important moments, as well as of some important contributions, of this representative organization of the market economy, to the economic and social evolution of Dobrudja region and especially of Constanţa county.

A group of authors, employees of the existing Chamber of Commerce of Constanţa County (Constanţa Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Navigation and Agriculture-CCINA), coordinated by the general director of the organization - Associate Professor I.D. Jugănar, elaborated, in 2010, a first edition of the Chamber's monograph, capitalizing a good part of the monographic material elaborated in 2000, on the 120th anniversary of the founding of the Chamber, a work carried out by a group of CCINA employees (Jugănar et al., 2010).

The second edition of the monograph, revised and completed, was elaborated in 2015, under the coordination of the same main author. Also, the monographic material elaborated and published in 2005, in a special issue of the *Manager* magazine of CCINA, was taken over, revised and completed, on the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the first Chamber of Commerce of Dobrudja, in Constanţa. The second edition of the monograph, elaborated in 2010, was revised and completed, both with information on the "old" Chamber of Commerce of Constanţa, established in 1880 (especially with the help of additional information provided by Mr. Virgil Coman, who holds a Ph.D in history), and with the activities and actions carried out by CCINA Constanţa in the 2010-2015 period (Jugănar et al., 2015a, p. 9).

In 2020, a third edition of the monograph is being elaborated and will be published, probably during September of this year, completed with numerous information, discovered in the archives, some of them identified by Mr. Constantin Cheramidoglu, who holds a Ph.D in history, who agreed to be co-opted as author of the first part of this edition of the monograph for the chapters regarding the activity of the "old" Chamber, founded in 1880. This third edition of the monograph is revised and completed also with information regarding the current Chamber of Commerce of Constanța, from the 2015-2020 period.

### 3. Research methodology

The hereby article is based on a qualitative, office research, taking into account text and documentation analysis, using secondary information, collected in longitudinal profile (Jugănar, 1998), over a long time (1880-2020). The information collection method was observation (Silverman, 2004). The main data sources regarding the beginnings of the Chamber are documents from the archives of the Constanța County Service of National Archives (The Fund of the Chamber of Commerce). Additionally, information was collected from various databases put into place by specialists from the network of Chambers of Commerce and online sources were used only in a smaller ratio. The data analysis was done by personal interpretation.

### 4. Findings

The constituency of the Chamber of Commerce of Constanța has undergone, over time, several changes. Thus, between 1880 and 1910, it included the counties of Tulcea and Constanța; between 1910 and 1914, it covered only Constanța County; between 1914 and 1924, it included Constanța, Durostor and Caliacra; between 1924 and 1926: Constanța and Caliacra; between 1926 and 1934, only Constanța; between 1934 and 1940: Constanța, Caliacra and Durostor, and between 1940 and 1949, only Constanța.

In 1929, the **Law amending the Law on Chambers of Commerce and Industry** was adopted, promulgated by Royal Decree no. 403 / 13.11.1929. The Chamber of Commerce of Constanța made important observations, while being consulted on the draft of this law, then submitted them to the respective Ministry, the Union of Chambers of Commerce and also to the members of Parliament representing Constanța, in order to be supported in the Chamber, during the debates on this law (Jugănar et al., 2015b, p.19).

The Law on Chambers of Commerce and Industry would be amended again in 1934. The new law established: *Chambers of Commerce and Industry are established and amended by Royal Decree*. The same law stipulated that: *the Danube ports and county capitals will have a Chamber of Commerce for the county they belong to*. According to this law, Constanta Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established along with other 42 Chambers.

The members of the Chamber were grouped into two sections: commercial and industrial. One of the basic responsibilities of the Chamber was the registration of traders and their radiation. It is noteworthy to mention the great fluctuation of companies from that period, ever since the start of the chamber institution. For example, between 1880 and 1928, there were 10,566 social and individual companies operating, but in 1928 there were only 2,301 (Jugănar et al., 2015a, p. 20).

In the newspaper *Voința Dobrogei/Dobrudja's Will* from March 4, 1934, we find out about the Establishment of the Interim Commission of the Chamber of Commerce: Through the new law on the reorganization of professional chambers, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Constanța also received the Durostor and Caliacra counties in its constituency.

#### 4.1. Initiatives of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce

In 1922, the Chamber of Commerce of Constanța had the initiative to hold the first Congress of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Greater Romania (28 - 30.IX), when the following were discussed: freedom of trade and limiting state intervention in trade and industry, the reorganization of the Chambers of Commerce, the cereals regime of export, the new taxes, the reorganization of the commercial education, the organization of transports, the expansion and reorganization of the ports, the system of the joint-stock companies (CCI, XV Constanta, 1922).

At the Congress of the Union of Chambers of Commerce (May 29, 1932), held in Galați, Mr. Valentin Popescu, the President of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry presented some important items on the agenda, throughout: *the trade policy of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and of Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in particular and the transportation issue.*

Over time, the *voice* of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry has always been heard, listened to and respected, locally, regionally and nationally.

The activity of this institution has also included the compilation and submission of memoranda to the concerned ministries, in order to improve the economic situation of Constanta county and, especially, of the port and the Constanța city. This was the case, for example, in March 1924, when a memorandum was sent to Bucharest on the issue of the establishment of the franco porto/ free-trade zone regime in Constanța.

Also in that period there was an intense activity of the Chamber externally. Thus, the local newspaper Dacia, from February 24, 1924, announced: The day before, the Chamber of Commerce submitted the text of the Geneva International Customs Convention, together with a memorandum on this treaty, pleading for its ratification by the Romanian government, to the Ministry of Finance. A good news was that Paris International Chamber of Commerce offered this assignment to the Constanța Chamber of Commerce, which is an active member. As a confirmation of the role played at that time by this local institution, in the spring of 1924, George Georgescu was confirmed as a member of the arbitration chamber attached to the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. At the local level, the administrative law also recognized the importance of this institution, stipulating that the president of the Chamber of Commerce be automatically part of the local council.

Along the same lines, we mention the efforts related to the free trade zones law, from 1929. Thus, in the assembly of CCI Constanța, from June 5, 1929, Valentin Popescu, a member of the joint ministerial commission for the elaboration of this draft law, claimed the necessity of the urgent application of the autonomy of the ports and the free trade zone regime.

Moreover, the Chamber of Commerce of Constanța made important observations on the draft law for amending the turnover and luxury tax, requesting significant reductions in the stamp duty and registration tax, as well as other taxes. The abolition of the luxury tax and turnover was requested for craftsmen and small industrialists and the reduction of quotas and revision of the placement of these taxes for traders and industrialists. Regarding the direct taxes, the Chamber proposed: the simplification of the taxation apparatus, the decrease of the annual tax rates; to significantly reduce the additional taxes rates; to abolish the supplementary tax and the minimum tax; to repeal all criminal provisions of the existing tax law, and to abolish the incentive premiums granted to tax authorities.

#### **4.2. Involvement of the Chamber in the organization of the Stock Exchange and of the Arbitration Chamber**

The Stock Exchange and the Arbitration Chamber were important bodies, established at the proposal of the Chamber and subordinated to it.

The proposal to establish a Stock Exchange in Constanța has been requested by the Constanta Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the issue has been discussed for the first time by its management, in the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> of June 1898. The Constanța Stock Exchange was requested by the Chamber of Commerce through several memoranda, following which, on the 25 September 1898, the establishment of this institution in Constanța was approved, by Royal Decree no. 2809 / September 25, 1898. But the real establishment of this institution would take place in 1910, when the registers of stock exchange operations were also compiled. Also in that year, the first Bulletin of the Stock Exchange appeared, in which the quotations of cereals prices and data about the concluded transactions, the cereals stocks, etc. were published. The Stock Exchange's offices initially functioned in the premises of the Chamber of Commerce, and then in the headquarters built for this purpose, next to the silos in the port (Cheramidoglu, 2016, p.170).

From the beginning, the Stock Exchange in Constanța aimed to facilitate cereals transactions, and as such, its staff included intermediaries of goods, but not of exchange.

In 1929, the Law on Stock Exchanges appeared, which, in part III, tackled the establishment and competence of Commodity Exchanges. Art. 84 stipulated the following: *in accordance with the provisions of this law, at the proposal of the Constanta Chamber of Commerce and industry, and by the approval of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Commodity Exchanges for types of products or goods can be established and will be divided into sections according to the specialties.* (Official Gazette no. 178, 1929, p. 6504).

Since the establishment of the Stock Exchange in 1898, disputes were judged by an "a l'amiable", commission set up by the parties. In 1910, on the occasion of the reorganization of the Stock Exchange, the Chamber of Arbitration and Conciliation was established, based on the law on stock exchanges, which carries out the first trial on June 22, 1910.

The number and structure of the trials carried out were different, from one year to another. Thus, in the 1910 -1927 period there were 427 trials, of which: 121 cases were *admitted in full*, 122 were *admitted in part*, 27 were rejected, 30 were withdrawn, two were canceled, 92 were final, etc.

The Law on stock exchanges, promulgated in 1929, includes a special part, Part IV - Judgment of Disputes, regulating the *Arbitration Chambers* (Chapter I) and the *Procedure before the Arbitration Chamber* (Chapter II) (Jugănaru et al., 2010, pp.29-30).

The Chamber of Commerce has carried out an intense activity for the establishment of other institutions and the support of their operation. Thus, in 1894, the Discount Bank was established, the first local capital credit institution. It operated continuously, until 1921, when it changed its name into Dobrudja Credit Bank (in 1927 it had a capital of 5 million lei and 1.9 million lei reserve funds).

The activity of the Chamber of Commerce, over time, was reflected in the Bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, published monthly, in 685 issues, between January 1891 and January 1944.

At the leadership of the Chamber's meeting of January 9, 1941, the new Regulation on the issuing of the publication *Economic Dobrudja* was presented, which was intended to become "a living forum of a new spirit and a guide for merchants and industrialists". It also mentioned: "The management of the Constanta Chamber of Commerce decided the reorganization of Economic Dobrudja, the official Bulletin of the Chamber, taking into consideration the need to create an economic advertising body, meant as a guide for trade and industry in Constanța County and a mean of exchanging opinions with other chambers of commerce and commercial and industrial companies in the country. And in article 2 it was specified that Economic Dobrudja will start to appear: weekly, on 4 large pages, with a tendency towards 6 pages, for each issue and will include, not only the official part of the matter but also economic and social articles, information, communications, economic news, statistical data, declared policies, notarial deeds, indications and extracts on new laws, business links and official correspondence, data on the movements of the port of Constanța, in other words, everything that may be of interest to trade and industry" (S.J.A.N. Constanța, File 30/1939, p. 40).

### **4.3. Inauguration of the new locations of the cereal market and of the Economic Museum of Dobrudja**

In the Economic Dobrudja Bulletin, of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry (no. 79-80, of November 1-15, 1937), two important economic events were reported: the inauguration of the cereal exchange location within the new market and the Regional Economic Museum of Dobrudja, both locations being *challenged to contribute, to a large extent, to the promotion of agriculture, trade, industry and other branches of regional economic activity.*

On the same day as the inauguration of the new cereals market location in Constanța (November 9, 1937), another important event took place, the inauguration of the Economic Museum of Dobrudja, which was, in fact, a permanent exhibition of Dobrudjan products. The Economic Museum of Dobrudja was installed in the Palace of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce. In the four salons, in which the most important and most representative Dobrudjan products were exhibited in showcases, the most important and representative Dobrudjan products, both flora, fauna and subsoil natural products, but also industrialized products could be found.

According to the article dedicated to this event, published in the "*Economic Dobrudja*" Bulletin of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry (no. 79-90, of November 1-15, 1937), the product categories and exhibiting companies are described. The Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry President pointed out that the rapid development of Constanța municipality and its role of "metropolis of Dobrudja, from where ideas should blossom in all directions" required the emergence of this economic museum. It shows that in Dobrudja, "*the brilliance of Commerce is permanent*", and the Chamber of Commerce must have, in its premises, "Dobrudja's economy, in miniature, to know how and where to work".

#### **4.4. The Chamber of Commerce of Constanța, an important supporter of education**

Acting in the spirit of King Carol I's idea that "School must be the foundation of the state", the Chamber of Commerce of Constanța made sure that, throughout history, through its preoccupations, the commercial education would meet the requirements of those times.

In 1903 there was a commercial section in Constanța, attached to the local gymnasium, which was dissolved in 1905, only to be re-established in 1907 and which functioned until 1911. After this date, thanks to the Chamber and its members, other important trade schools were established. Thus, in 1915, the Commercial Practical School for Boys was established, with 3 night classes, lasting 3 years, which operated on the premises of the Commercial Higher School for Boys and was subsidized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 1920, on the initiative of ICC Constanța's President, the Commercial Higher School for Boys was set up, with a duration of 4 years. The full maintenance (rent of the premises, teaching materials, furniture, teachers' and administrative staff' salaries, housing for the director and administrative staff, maintenance costs) were entirely borne by the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1924, the 3-year Commercial Elementary School for Boys was established. In 1936, it was transformed into a Commercial Gymnasium of type A, with 4 budgetary classes (I, II, III, IV) and 2 extra-budgetary classes (from 1937 - 4 classes). In 1941, the Commercial Gymnasium for Boys merged with the Commercial High School for Boys.

In 1925, the 4-year Commercial Higher School for Girls was established. In the same year, the Higher School for Boys was established, a night class, lasting 3 years, and in 1927, the Commercial Elementary School for Girls, a day class.

All of these schools were subsidized by CCI. At that time, amounts of over 2 million lei were allocated annually from the budget of the Chamber for the maintenance of the respective schools.

In 1922, the Chamber bought a space where the Commercial Higher School for Boys, day and night classes operated, the first graduation being in 1924. By the law on the organization of secondary commercial education, from April 1, 1936, it was transformed into the Commercial High School of type C, with 4 classes (from the 5th to the 8th). By the decision of March 21, 1942, the Commercial Gymnasium for Boys and Commercial High School for Boys merged and became "King Carol I" Commercial High School for Boys.

In 1924, CCI Constanța established the Industrial Apprentice Schools no. 1 and 2, which it subsidized.

From a press release of the Chamber of Commerce, published in *Dacia* magazine, no. 34, of April 12, 1933, we find out that, in the 1924 - 1933 period (when Romania was in a deep economic crisis) Constanta Chamber of Commerce and Industry offered subsidies of over one million lei every year for commercial and industrial schools.

*Dacia* newspaper no. 134 / 22.VI.1926 publishes the decisions of the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors' meeting, which informs us that: A subsidy of 40,000 lei and a loan of the same amount was granted by Chamber taking into consideration the request made by the committee of the Commercial Elementary School. This amount was used by the school in order to pay its teachers.

In the interest of a good capitalization both of the fishery products and of the labor force, CCI Constanța created, in 1936, the School of fishermen and hunters from Constanta and continued to support the operating expenses of this school.

The Chamber of Commerce contributed over the years with subsidies to the maintenance of the Commercial High School for Boys in the locality, and also of the other schools, and focused on practical commercial education. To this end, it intervened and obtained, in the autumn of 1939, the

reopening of the classes of the Commercial Practical School, a night class, providing for its operation, all expenses, for the whole year, so that education would be taught free of charge to students (Jugănaru et al., 2015a, pp.35-37).

#### **4.5. Activities and positions of the Chamber, reflected in the press of those times and in archive documents**

The print media of the time reported many of the concerns of the Chamber of Commerce of Constanța. Thus, on December 2, 1912, the Express-commercial newspaper, titled *financial and industrial body of the Dobrudjans*, published the memorandum, submitted during the previous year, by the president of the Constanța Chamber to the general director of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Service, in order to improve this service in Constanța. Deficiencies were reported in the operation of these services, such as: long delays in receiving telegrams from abroad, thus harming the interests of cereals traders; deficiencies in postal, telegraph and telephone service. The expansion and improvement of the telegraph service was also requested, because the telegraph line existing at the time, between Constanța and Bucharest, was often interrupted due to bad weather, very common in the area, and the telegraph service, in such cases, also made conducting telephone correspondence between these centers difficult. Moreover, the telephone service in the port of Constanța could not meet the requirements of multiple calls needed for the business relations between Constanța and other commercial ports. A second two-wire telephone circuit between Constanța and Bucharest was urgently needed.

In its February 24, 1924 issue, the local daily Dacia published the news concerning submittance by the Constanta Chamber of Commerce to the Ministry of Finance of the text of the Geneva International Customs Convention, together with a memorandum on this treaty, pleading for its ratification by the Romanian government.

In the autumn of 1928, in Constanța, the 50th anniversary of Dobrudja's return to the Romanian Principalities was celebrated, and on this occasion a beautiful exhibition was organized at the Casino in the city. The role of the Chamber of Commerce in this event was reported by the local newspaper Dacia from October 26, 1928 as following: The local Chamber of Commerce has set up a *grand pavilion* in the exhibition area of the municipal Casino, which showed the progress of the activities of the economic branches in the Dobrudja region. The pavilion was organized under the direct supervision of the Chamber's Steering Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Ștefan Boroș. This interesting exhibition is divided into sections. Thus, the following were represented: the furniture industry, the food industry, the ceramic industry, the leather industry, the metallurgical industry (CCI Constanța, 1928).

#### **4.6. Insurance and Aid House of Merchants and Industrialists from the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry constituency**

With the approval of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry established the Insurance and Aid House of Merchants and Industrialists, by decision no. I 45440/18 March 1933. The establishment of this Aid House was carried out based on the provisions of art. 3, point 13, letter f), of the law and Regulation of the law of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Law amending the Law of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry promulgated by Royal Decree no. 403 of 11 February 1929).

The house, "*attached*" to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Constanța, established "for the impoverished traders and industrialists from this constituency", aimed "to ensure and provide aid to those traders and industrialists who have become poor or have no livelihood". The *inalienable* fund of the House consisted of an initial Fund of 900,000 lei, allocated from the budget of the 1931 financial year of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Constanța. Also, according to their Statute, the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry would allocate, in order to increase the inalienable Fund of the House, 25% of its surplus, achieved at the end of each budget year.

#### **4.7. The Federation of Dobrudja's Chambers of Commerce and Industry**

In the *Economic Dobrudja* Bulletin of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce and Industry (no. 67-70 of June 1, 1937), under the signature of the editor N. Sever Cârpenișanu, on the first page, the article *The Federalization of the Dobrudjan Chambers of Commerce* appeared, from which we find out that, on the initiative of the Constanța Chamber of Commerce, following the example of the Bessarabian Chambers of Commerce, the Federation of Dobrudja's Chambers of Commerce, based in Constanța, was set up the previous month, the president of which was the president of Constanta Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Federation of Dobrudja's Chambers of Commerce was based in Constanta having as members, the Constanța, Tulcea, Durostor and Caliacra Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The founders of the Federation considered that, through its creation, the following, among others, could be better defended: some specific interests of the economy of this region, i.e. the marketing of specific Dobrudjan products, such as wool, for the textile industry, the sheep and the wether of Dobrudja, for meat, the Dobrudjan horses, "for the regeneration of which a whole work plan must be drawn up" (as stated in the cited article), the capitalization of the Durostor durum wheat, fishing, ores in the area (granite, kaolin, stone, etc.), as well as creating some important industries, taking into consideration that in the area there is enough raw material and also sufficient outlet in the country.

All these objectives were included in the Federation's work plan, together with other preoccupations, necessary for the development of trade and industry, such as:

- The communication routes, the Babadag-Tulcea line, the Tekirghiol-Mangalia line, and its descent further South, the permanent and usable Silistra-Călărași connection – *especially during the winter*;

- The creation and maintenance of a permanent traffic with coastal ships or *motor ships*, between Southern Bessarabia and the mouths of the Danube, and between Southern Dobrudja and Constanța, which can be used as a solution of decongestionation of railway traffic during season – for cereals haulage

- The transport of cereals from the silos in Constanța, *when they are unblocked the boats can deliver directly on the bigger ships for export*.

The Federations of the Romanian Chambers of Commerce, established at that time, hoped to determine and guide, among other things, a mentality appropriate to the achievements of the state's economic policy, the Federation of Dobrudja's Chambers of Commerce being an important link.

#### **4.8. The dissolution of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Constanța, in 1949**

The first part of the history of the Chambers of Commerce of Constanța and from the other counties in Romania ends in 1949, when, through the provisions of Decree no. 74 / 25.11.1949, published in the Official Gazette no. 47 of 25.11.1949, they are dissolved, only the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania being maintained in operation, being subordinated to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and having, as a basic responsibility, the organization of Romania's participation in international fairs.

The coming to power of the communist regime in Romania meant, among other things, the abolition of the local Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which were to be re-established, however, on new bases, in 1990.

### **5. Conclusions**

The first Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Historical Dobrudja region, in Romania, founded in 1880, had a particularly difficult mission, due to the precarious economic and social situation of the region, after centuries of this region being under the Ottoman Empire occupation.

There were no significant industrial units in the area, and agriculture was done with rudimentary means of processing the land. There was a need for a fundamental construction of the region's economy, and also of the institutions necessary for the good development of the economic activity.



It took special efforts to create institutions for the economy which did not yet exist at that time in the area, but which had been operating for a long time in other countries and even in other Romanian regions. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Constanța has founded, among others: fairs, markets, the Stock Exchange, the Arbitration Chamber, the Discount Bank, the Insurance and Aid House of Merchants and Industrialists and many others.

On the other hand, the Chamber has set up and financed, over time, the operation of many commercial schools, of different levels, throughout the region.

The activity of CCI Constanta has been very important in representing the interests of its members, of the business environment, in relation to the local and national authorities, through its interventions managing to obtain more favorable regulations, meant to support the economic and social evolution of Constanța county and Dobrudja region.

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