



DET NORSKE VIDENSKAPS-AKADEMI
THE NORWEGIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCE AND LETTERS

Open Letter to
Traian Băsescu, President of Romania
Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, Prime Minister of Romania

Oslo, 24 February

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters will express its concern about academic freedom and minority rights in Romania for the Hungarian population and its scientific community. We have been informed that the Hungarian-language university which existed in Romania from 1945 till 1959, was under the Ceausescu regime forced to be assimilated into the mainly Romanian Babes-Bolyai University. We have received credible information that over the past 15 years it has become clear that the present structure does not serve the adequate training of Hungarian professionals in Romania. Although the Hungarian Government sustains two private universities in Transylvania, Hungarians in Romania are heavily underrepresented in higher education.

There are successful examples of higher education in minority languages in Europe and elsewhere - eg, Albanians in Macedonia, Catalans in Spain, Gagauz in Moldavia, Hungarians in Slovakia, Sámi in Norway, and Swedes in Finland, who enjoy the benefits of a public (state-financed) university or university programmes in their own languages. We understand Romania's pressing current problems but feel that in order to create a truly democratic society, which includes all major ethnic groups, the Romanian authorities should grant minority rights in education to the 1½ million-strong Hungarian ethnic minority in Romania. In this context one should consider to re-establish the public Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca/Kolozsvár. This would serve as a strong signal that the Romanian government is willing to give priority to fulfilling its obligation under international law to secure democratic and cultural rights of minorities.

Yours respectfully

Jan Fridthjof Bernt
Vice President

Reidun Sirevåg
Secretary General

Copy: José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission