



To The Ministry of Education and Research

Addressed to the minister of Education and Research, prof. Monica Cristina ANISIE

Esteemed minister,

In these last weeks, representatives of **Alianța Națională a Organizațiilor Studențești din România (ANOSR)** took part in numerous meetings of the **European Students' Union (ESU)**, during which they discussed with representatives of the students from **The Republic Of Belarus**. The topic of these talks was related to the current situation of higher education in their country, a member of the **European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, in the context of their ongoing political crisis. The stories they shared with us regarding what is going on with the academical community in their country had a very powerful impact on all attendees. They spoke about many first hand accounts of students being forcefully detained while peacefully protesting in university campuses.

Following the presidential elections that took place in the first part of September, Belarusian students took to the streets in order to peacefully protest the results. The current Minsk regime responded by deploying masked riot police that proceeded to violently detain protesters in public spaces and university campuses, as such **breaking any trace of a university's autonomy**.

With the meeting of the **Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG)**, taking place in September, we urge the Ministry of Education and Research to join the other members involved in the **Bologna Process** in signaling these fragrant issues to the representatives of Belarus. Protecting the right to free speech is paramount in a free and autonomous university, being a fundamental right in a country that wishes to follow and implement the values portrayed by this process.

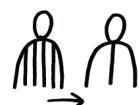
As members of **EHEA** starting from 2015, Belarus gave assurances that they would adopt a **structural reform** related to education and learning, reforms based upon the values of free speech, institutional autonomy, academical freedom and the independence of the student movement.

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Taking into account these major incidents, we ask the Ministry of Education and Research to subscribe to the ongoing international procedures related to Belarus and to undertake in the following actions:

1. **Condemn the violation of students' rights** and of the academic environment from the Republic of Belarus and to demand the immediate release of all people who have been wrongfully detained.
2. Send an official letter to the **World Bank**, along with the other European partners involved with the **BFUG**, demanding the suspension of all transfers of funds towards Belarus with the goal of implementing modernization projects for higher education, until a **minimal set of guarantees** that the values of the Bologna Process are put into place.
3. Engaging in and promoting the initiatives of other European states of granting **scholarships** for the students of Belarus who have been victims of political persecution and urging the other member states of **EHEA** to follow in these footsteps.

We strongly believe that the communities of universities in Belarus must be supported and protected. The European Higher Education Area risks creating a very dangerous precedent if swift action is not taken in order to guarantee the fundamental values on which the whole process has been consolidated.

In the hopes of a favorable answer, we assure you of our consideration!

With warm regards,

Horia ONITA

Președint of ANOSR

23.09.2020

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