

University of Bucharest calls for commitment to Romania's democratic and Euro-Atlantic future

On April 22, 2025, Romania marks 35 years since the onset of the University Square protests. Two days later, on April 24, it commemorates the opening of the University Balcony—a symbolic platform of the democracy rediscovered by Romanians. This was the place where the spirit of liberty, long championed by our intellectual elites within the academic sphere, converged with the anti-communist and anti-totalitarian voices of citizens. These were the voices of those who, in December 1989, gathered in University Square and at the Barricade in Bucharest, demanding, at the cost of blood, Freedom and Justice.

In these turbulent times, 35 years after the Revolution, we once again witness how our hard-won freedom from 1989 and 1990 is threatened by the forces of anti-democratic, authoritarian, and dictatorial regimes, constructed through populism, manipulation, and hybrid war. This is a war waged from the remnants of former communist regimes, exploiting the fertile ground of inefficiency and incompetence within the Romanian political system, as well as the ignorance and dissatisfaction of certain segments of the population.

Over the past 35 years, Romanian society has consistently conveyed a clear message against a mode of governance and political practices that have persistently hindered genuine reform and the complete modernization of Romania.

Civic actors and organizations that, through their representatives, spoke 35 years ago from the University Balcony—such as the University of Bucharest, the "21 December 1989" Association, the Seniors of the Student League, and many others—have been and remain integral to the continuous pressure exerted by Romanian civil society to defend civil liberties, democracy, and the social rights secured in 1989. They firmly reiterate their commitment to preserving Romania's Euro-Atlantic orientation and the values of an open society, which are fundamental to the Romanian state and the contemporary Romanian nation.

We firmly believe that addressing governmental inefficiency and social inequalities must occur exclusively within a democratic framework, based on values and norms. As all opinion polls indicate, a significant majority of Romanians support maintaining Romania's membership in the European Union and NATO, the Strategic Partnership with the USA, as well as our country's steadfast Euro-Atlantic orientation, as it is clearly stated in Romania's Constitution.

For these reasons, **we call upon all candidates for the highest office in the state, the Presidency of Romania - especially since the majority are alumni of our university - to sign, in the antechamber of the University Balcony, a Declaration** committing to:

- Help preserve the memory of the 1989 Revolution and the University Square movement as key moral and political milestones in Romania's democratic journey.
- Uphold the rule of law and respect the Romanian Constitution, both in letter and in spirit.
- Ensure that cases related to Romania's recent history—from 1945 to 1990—are resolved fairly and without delay, in line with ECHR rulings, including those involving the crimes of communism, December 1989, and June 13–15, 1990.
- Reaffirm Romania's commitment to the European Union, NATO, and the Strategic Partnership with the United States.

- Support real university autonomy, both in terms of academic freedom and adequate funding, and recognize the essential role of higher education in Romania's development.
- Protect freedom of expression for citizens, NGOs, and civil society, and acknowledge their vital role in a healthy democratic society.
- Use all presidential powers to ensure that those responsible for crimes and abuses, both before and after 1989, are brought to justice.
- Work to reduce social divisions, promote institutional transparency, and encourage open dialogue between the state and society.

The Declaration is open for signing on Thursday, April 24, 2025, between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM, at the University Balcony (Faculty of Geography, 1 Nicolae Bălcescu Boulevard, Sector 1, Bucharest).

Additionally, we invite the candidates to publicly commit to participating in a debate organized in the Aula Magna of the University of Bucharest on one of the following dates: May 13, 14, or 15, 2025, should they qualify for the second round of the presidential elections.

Signatories:

- University of Bucharest,
Prof. Marian Preda, Rector
Prof. Emil Constantinescu, Vice-Rector and Rector of the University of Bucharest (1990–1996)
- "21 December 1989" Association,
Teodor Mărieș, President
- Seniors of the Student League (affiliated with the "Initiative for Memory and Justice" of the "21 December 1989" Association),
Represented by Antonie Popescu, Attorney