



Klaus Werner Iohannis
President of Romania
Cotroceni Palace
Geniului Boulevard, no. 1-3 Sector 6
Bucharest, zip code 060116
Romania

31 August 2017

Dear Mr President,

Re: Draft single textbook law proposal in Romania

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the world federation of national publishers associations, representing all aspects of worldwide book and journal publishing. The IPA promotes and protects publishing – proclaiming its power to drive economic, cultural and political development. This power is nowhere more manifest than in the enriching contribution of quality educational materials towards social progress, national cohesion and cultural identity.

The IPA and, in particular, our Freedom to Publish Committee and Educational Publishers Forum, write to you to express our deep concern at your Minister of Education's proposal to impose a 'unique textbook' policy in Romanian public schools.

The IPA's view, arrived at over a century of experience in the sector, is that the most successful education systems are those that incentivize educational publishers to compete in an open market and to develop innovative solutions that meet local needs.

The one-textbook model drives down the quality and range of educational resources, damaging educational performances and youth literacy. In the 2015 PISA tests Romania saw a slight improvement, but still came in well below the OECD average and last in the EU, trailing Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria. Adopting a single textbook law all but guarantees that Romania's PISA scores will tumble for many years to come.

In addition, it endangers educational publishers, deters investment in the creation of new and better books, and eradicates thousands of direct and indirect jobs, whether authors, printers, illustrators, photographers, editors, reviewers, salesforce, consultants, or marketers.

Finally, state control of any publishing sector flies in the face of the democratic principle of the freedom to publish, because it denies legitimate publishers their right to operate freely in their domestic markets. It also confines students to a government-sanctioned worldview, whether in history, politics, religious studies, or indeed any subject where access to diverse resources is necessary in learning to think critically and independently – skills that are essential for the knowledge economy of the future.

What Liviu Pop is proposing risks the creation of a deeply unhealthy and undesirable ideological monoculture that is wholly inconsistent with a modern EU Member State.



Governments' desire to provide cheaper books is understandable. But the 'unique textbook' policy is a mistake born of short-term thinking. We urge your government to consider the long-term damage that such a policy would cause.

It is possible to find better solutions that guarantee low prices yet maintain the diversity and competitiveness of an open publishing market.

The IPA stands ready to help Minister Pop and your government to identify such solutions before the damage is done.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Michiel Kolman
President, IPA

Kristenn Einarsson
Chair, Freedom to Publish
Committee

Wilmar Diepgrond
Chair, Educational Publishers
Forum