

## Exemption from university accommodation facilities payment during the COVID-19 pandemic

Due to Coronavirus outbreak in Romania, the **National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR) urges all higher education institutions to exempt the payment for students' accommodation**, for all those who have left their dorms during the pandemic.

The spread of Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has led to the adoption of extraordinary measures at national level. Thus, following ANOSR's appeal from March, 9th, and the recommendations given by the National Committee for Special Emergency Situations (CNSSU), the Administration Councils and university Senates **decided to suspend the face-to-face activities** among all higher education institutions and proceed to alternative teaching and learning methods. Following the transfer of the teaching activities in the online environment, most **students accommodated in universities' facilities have chosen to return to their home** until the situation is stabilized and the physical interaction would be resumed within HEIs.

However, **public universities continue to receive grants from public funds related to the administration of student accommodation facilities and canteens**, according to the National Law of Education no. 1/ 2011 and the Minister Order no. 3130/ 2019 regarding the *Methodology for the allocation of the budgetary funds destined for the dormitory and canteen subsidies for the public higher education institutions in Romania*.

At the same time, we recall the provisions of Article no. 205, Line 13 from the National Law of Education no. 1/ 2011, according to which the *tariffs applied by universities for students who benefit from social services (accommodation and canteen) are at most equal to the difference between the running costs and the subsidies from the state budget*. At this time, the operating costs of universities' dormitories and canteens are reduced or non-existent (since most canteens are closed), it is clear that **there is no legal basis for maintaining the accommodation taxes at the amount charged in normal conditions**.

We consider that the exemption of the accommodation fees for students that chose to return home during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak is a measure not only for the benefit of students, but also absolutely necessary and perfectly justified in the current context. Therefore, **we call on all public universities to apply these measures as a matter of urgency**.

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