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## **Romania: 13 representatives of cults in defence of religious freedom. B?nescu (Orthodox Patriarchate), “religion an essential part of the cultural code”**

In a joint letter, the recognised cults in Romania call on the Romanian Minister of Education, Ligia Deca, to amend the legislative proposals to change the current teaching law. The thirteen religious representatives warn that certain changes are discriminatory and contradict rights guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution: the right of parents to provide their children with an education that complies with their religious convictions; the freedom of religious teaching, according to the specific nature of each cult; the right of cults to organise their own theological teaching. In addition, religious leaders propose the inclusion of religion as a free-choice subject for the High School diploma, and call for the removal of the requirement to promote “diversity” in schools. In a statement, Vasile B?nescu, spokesman for the Romanian Orthodox Patriarchate, explained that “religion is a subject that can open a window to a broader horizon” and that “it is inevitably an essential part of the moral, social and cultural code of the world in which we live”. The representatives of the cults also recalled that the Romanian State recognises the spiritual, educational, socio-charitable and cultural role of cults and expressed the desire to "cooperate more with the State to promote integral education", "because the lack of existential meaning in today's technocratic society has negative consequences on the orientation of young people in society".

Valentina Bombelli