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To the Prime Minister and the Chair of Parliament of Bulgaria

November 23, 2010

Respected gentlemen,

I am told by Bulgarian colleagues I respect, that the Bulgarian government decided to close down gradually some of the finest Bulgarian institutions of higher learning, among them the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

In the last three decades I have known these institutions as they were alone in your country in producing some scientific results of International renown in the field of Physics and Mathematics. You have been lucky that an important part of your most prominent scientists remained in Bulgaria, after the collapse of the Eastern block.

Countries like yours and mine, have the attitude, when they feel financially constrained or ``poor" to first cut down research and then education as politicians (a) they consider them luxury (b) they know few will complain if they do.

You cannot progress without education and you cannot have high quality education without top quality **basic** research. What aspirations and standards you expect the young generation will follow?

It is very easy to destroy a fine academic institution. It can be done in one shot.

It is very difficult to create one from scratch. Many of the countries that are putting a lot of funding to do this, they know it the hard way.

I think that if you eventually manage to abolish your fine institutions you then be truly poor. Bulgarians in the last 150 years have shown they are smarter than this.

I hope that you will be even smarter than them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elias Kiritsis', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the left.

Elias Kiritsis

Professor of Physics, University and Crete
and
Directeur de Recherche au CNRS, APC, Paris 7