

# Disincentivizing the performance: the case of the Romanian national criteria for evaluating research in Economic Sciences<sup>\*</sup>

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Motto: “... *the vital problem for the Romanian culture, for the Romanian science: the still very large number of those who, working in research, lack the courage, the capacity, or the will to enter the global game of competition for value*”

-Solomon Marcus-

## Abstract

We provide a descriptive analysis showing the absurdity of the *current Romanian national criteria for evaluating scientific research*, and their consequences materialized in the proliferation and promotion of scientific pseudo-values, in the case of the Economic Sciences. Under the pretext of local scientometric objectivity, there are currently in use *domestic evaluation standards* that have nothing in common with the *international academic standards* used in the civilized world, *explicitly ignoring the quality of the publications and implicitly disincentivizing the performance and the excellence in scientific research*. The conclusions of our empirical exercise uncover, *inter alia*, an *ad litteram hallucinating reality*: a. *none of the Romanian academic economists with top publications based abroad, members of the Scientific Committees (SC) of the [ERMAS](http://www.econacademia.net/english.html) 2014 and 2015 conferences (see <http://www.econacademia.net/english.html> for some information in English on these Annual Conferences of Romanian Academic Economics from Abroad=ERMAS started in August 2014), meets the minimal domestic (“CNATDCU”) criteria for Full Professor, less than 20% meeting even minimal domestic criteria for Associate Professor, this when over 80% of these SC members more than fulfill international academic standards for tenure at world top universities, for instance according to the “Tinbergen Institute Research Fellow” publication norm—part of them being already Full or Associate Professors at world Top 10 Economics Faculties; b. viceversa, *none of the persons who became Full Professor in Economic Sciences, between 2013-2015, in any of the 4 large universities with such profile from Romania (the “Universitaria Consortium”) meets the minimal criteria for tenure in any reasonable university/ research institute from outside Romania*. The domestic universe of research in Economics is parallel not only to excellence, but even to decency. According to some usual international standards, the set of Romanians with external affiliation and contributed presentations to ERMAS—70% of them Assistant Professors/ Postdocs/ PhD students—has a scientific production quality many times higher than that of all recent Full Professors inside Romania, on average publishing 10 to 20 times more in the set of scientific journals used for evaluating and ranking economic research internationally (such as those listed by CNRS France, Tilburg University, or the Tinbergen Institute). In fact, *over 99% of the research published by these domestic Professors is irrelevant* according to the Tilburg or Tinbergen standards, and *almost 25% of it is published in journals temporarily or permanently suppressed by Thomson Reuters from its Journal Citation Report*. The disastrous standing of Romanian universities and research institutes in any international ranking based on research output in Economic Sciences (and not only) is a direct consequence of the evaluation system in use, confirming the timeliness and the generality of the well-known Romanian proverb “după cum îți așterni, așa dormi”.*

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<sup>\*</sup> Translation of the title, motto, and abstract (first page) of an article originally written in Romanian, accessible at [http://www.sebastianbuhai.com/papers/publications/Raport\\_Criterii\\_Evaluare\\_Stiinte\\_Economice\\_Romania\\_6Dec2015.pdf](http://www.sebastianbuhai.com/papers/publications/Raport_Criterii_Evaluare_Stiinte_Economice_Romania_6Dec2015.pdf) or in blog format at <http://blog.econacademia.net/2015/12/demotivarea-performantei-cazul-criteriilor-nationale-de-evaluare-a-cercetarii-in-stiintele-economice-din-romania/> or as chapter of the 2015 “G3A Think Tank Report on Romanian science” at <http://rpss.inoe.ro/articles/231/file>. Update August 2016: the study has also been presented in a [plenary session](#) of the [ERMAS 2016 conference](#); the slides—in English—at [http://www.sebastianbuhai.com/Buhai\\_PlenaryERMAS2016\\_1August2016.pdf](http://www.sebastianbuhai.com/Buhai_PlenaryERMAS2016_1August2016.pdf).

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