

NEWS RELEASE, 25 FEBRUARY 2014

Romanian Ambassador visits London Metropolitan University

- *Dr Ion Jinga highlights strong economic links between countries*
- *But criticises suspension of maintenance loans for university students*

The Romanian Ambassador to the UK has hit out at the government's suspension of maintenance loans for Romanian and Bulgarian students.

Speaking to students and staff at London Metropolitan University's Faculty of Business and Law, Dr Ion Jinga touched upon the recent freezing of loans for university students, saying: "Targeting just two communities risks leading to discrimination."

The suspension was announced last year after the government said there had been an increase in loan applications from Romania and Bulgaria.

The Ambassador was speaking at London Metropolitan University's Moorgate Building, after being invited to meet Romanian students and find out more about the University's ties with his country.

During his talk, Dr Jinga highlighted the strong links between the UK and Romania, citing the €3.3billion value of trade between the two countries. He also encouraged Romanian graduates to consider returning to their home country after their studies to build careers and help the Romanian economy grow.

"The most valuable asset of a nation is its people, and its educated graduates are key to a country's success," he said. "So I would urge those Romanians who have studied in the UK to think about returning home after their studies or perhaps a few years working here.

"We have recently created over 100,000 new jobs in Romania, and the economy grew last year by 3.5% - the biggest economic growth in Europe. Your University [London Met] has a focus on business and law here in The City of London, but there are 5,000 British companies working in Romania today who would value students with such an education."

Dr Jinga added that he supported UK universities' willingness to recruit more Romanian students, but called upon them to do more to assist students while they are studying.

“British universities are among the very best in the world, so it’s understandable that they attract many Romanians to come and study with them. However, I’d like to see them do more to encourage students to think about how they can play a role in modern Romania after they have graduated,” he said.

Professor Stephen Perkins, Dean of the Faculty of Business and Law at London Met, said: “We feel passionately about supporting our Romanian students at London Met, and we are privileged that His Excellency visited us today.

"This follows other high-profile guests to the Faculty of Business and Law, such as Lord Young of Graffham who visited us last year to find out more about our links with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

“Today’s visit reflects our position as a global university, right here in this world city of London.”

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

London Metropolitan University

London Metropolitan University has a rich history with strong educational roots dating back to 1848.

The University as it is today was created in 2002 with the merging of London Guildhall University and the University of North London, the first merger between two universities in the UK. Its roots however, lie firmly in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Young Men, in 1848.

At London Metropolitan University we believe that everyone has the right to an accessible quality education. Our students enjoy the highest levels of support and our courses recently received top marks from the UK’s Quality Assurance Agency. We are proud of the diversity & achievements of our students, alumni and staff.

Here at London Met we put our students at the centre of all we do. London Met is a great place to study, located in the heart of one of the world’s most exciting cities. We stand out because we offer courses of quality, in a vibrant, socially diverse environment, which will help launch your career.

We are committed to helping our students build rewarding careers. Courses are designed and updated to be directly relevant to the current employment market.

London Met is as dynamic and multicultural as the city in which it is situated. Here you will meet and work with people from around the world, who will enrich your development and learning. Since our students come from a range of backgrounds, we have always made sure that the education we offer is accessible and flexible.

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