

Romania PM to forfeit PhD if faulted in plagiarism probe

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Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta said Tuesday he was willing to forfeit his PhD if he is found at fault by an ethics watchdog over accusations that he plagiarised large chunks of his thesis.

However, the premier again accused his rival President Traian Basescu of "fabricating" the [allegations](#) against him, charging one of Basescu's advisor of being the anonymous whistleblower quoted by the science journal Nature.

In its latest edition, the [British journal said](#) it had seen documents indicating more than half of Ponta's 432-page law thesis on the [International Criminal Court](#), written in Romanian, "consists of duplicated text".

However Ponta insisted that he had never tried to pass off someone else's work as his own.

"The only thing you can reproach me for is that I did not include references as footnotes on every page but only in the bibliography", he said.

"But the authors are mentioned in the bibliography, so you cannot say that my intention was to assume on my name things that were done by others.

"If the National Ethics Council finds that I made a mistake and that I

should have made footnotes, then I will pay by giving up my PhD title", the prime minister added.

The integrity of the National [Ethics](#) Council was recently called into question after the government sacked all its members ahead of its report into a separate plagiarism case involving Education Minister Ioan Mang.

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