



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 10, 2011

Romania to Tax Proceeds of Witchcraft

Everybody curses the taxman, but there is a new category of taxpayers in Romania that just might know how to really do it.

As [reported in various outlets](#), a new labor statute passed in Romania classifies the practice of witchcraft as a profession, thereby making the practitioners thereof liable for paying taxes on any income derived from witchcraft and associated activities (fortune telling, potion making, etc.). The announcement did have one economic benefit, however, as purveyors of ingredients in anti-government potions reported that their inventory was flying off the shelves.



Witches, fortune tellers, and other masters of the “dark arts” are organizing protests and brewing potions to “curse the government” of President Traian Basescu for passage of the law which went into effect on January 1. One group of about twelve witches plan to poison the Danube with mandrake in order to put a hex on government officials “so evil will befall them,” said Alisia, a witch participating in the protest.

Under the new law, witches, embalmers, valets, driving instructors, and other previously unclassified vocations will, like any self-employed person, be required to pay 16 percent income tax and make contributions to health and pension programs.

Government representatives insist that the new law will be enforced and that it is an important aspect of a nationwide crackdown on widespread tax evasion that supporters hope will ease the financial tribulations of a country suffering a recession.

“What is there to tax, when we hardly earn anything?” Alisia told the [Associated Press](#). In fact, published reports claim the payments to witches and astrologers usually are made in cash and are relatively small, at 20 to 30 lei (\$7-\$10) per consultation.

Not every witch is practicing incantations to hex the government. Some are proud of the recognition the new law affords. “This law is very good,” said Mihaela Minca. “It means that our magic gifts are recognized and I can open my own practice.”

Other witches were similarly excited about the new law for endowing their chosen career with the cache of formal recognition.

Witch Melissa Minca, sister of Mihaela, told The Associated Press she was “happy that we are legal,” as she pronounced the words of a spell on the banks of the Chitila River in southern Romania.

While the notion of witchcraft, spells, and potions might elicit laughs in most parts of the world, such matters are not to be trifled with in Romania — the home, it must be remembered, of Vlad the Impaler, the inspiration for the “Dracula” tale. The practice of witchcraft has played a significant and influential role in Romanian culture for centuries.



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So prevalent is respect if not outright belief in these superstitions that President Basescu and members of his administration have donned purple apparel on occasion in order to ward off evil.

Other Romanian leaders were similarly careful to court the protection of those claiming such powers. Late Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, had their own personal witch, for example.

Some Romanian politicians insist, as a matter of fact, that recent elections have been conducted under a curse. Mircea Geoana, who lost the presidential race to Basescu in 2009, blamed waves of negative energy by their opponent's aides for his embarrassing performance in a debate. Geoana aide Viorel Hrebenciuc pointed to a "violet flame" conspiracy during the campaign as the source of the poor performance.

Such mysticism is traditionally, though unofficially, tolerated by the Orthodox Church in Romania.

One longtime conjurer, Queen witch Bratara Buzea, remembers the oppression experienced by her colleagues in former days. Buzea, now 63 years old, was imprisoned in 1977 by Ceausecu for practicing witchcraft. She is incensed about the new scheme. [Interviewed](#) at her villa in the lake resort of Mogosoaia, Buzea told reporters that she planned to curse the government by casting a spell using a tried and true concoction of cat excrement and a dead dog. "We do harm to those who harm us," she said. "They want to take the country out of this crisis using us? They should get us out of the crisis because they brought us into it." She sat next to her wood-burning stove, surrounded by potions, charms, "holy" water, and ceramic pots. "My curses always work!" she cackled.

Photo: Bran Castle, Romania, which was built in 1212, and became commonly known as Dracula's Castle after the myths of being home of Vlad II the Impaler.



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