To: Bonn, 14th March 2011

Prime Minister
Tigran Sarkissyan
Republic Square
Governmenthouse 1
0010 Yerevan
Republic of Armenia

Minister
Tigran Davtyan
Ministry of Economy
M. Mkrtchyan Street 5,
0010 Yerevan
Republic of Armenia

Prof. Ashot Chilingarian
Director Yerevan Physics Institute
Br. Alikhaniyan Street 2,
0036 Yerevan
Republic of Armenia

Future of the former Yerevan Physics Institute

Your Excellencies,

We, the undersigned physicists, write this letter out of deep concern about the future of the theory department of the former Yerevan Institute. We have learned of a draft plan for the restructuring of the institute which envisages a serious restriction of the activities of the theory department, which might be termed a strangulation.

In the past the Yerevan Physics Institute has gained an outstanding reputation both in experimental and theoretical physics. We are aware that due to political upheavals and resettlements in the last quarter century, the institute (as well as many other institutions) has suffered reductions. But we also note that the Yerevan Physics Institute preserved in its experimental and theoretical research elements of continuity and quality which must be called outstanding. There is in the Caucasian/Eurasian region indeed no other research institute which is even only approximately as successful in maintaining international standards.

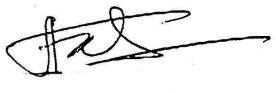
The wisdom of the above mentioned draft plan - to cut basically the ties to the past and to enter into a new field of research (nuclear physics) without any home-grown expertise - seems to be extremely dubious. In other words: Sacrificing the active and successful units and building a center in a traditional physical discipline without modern research program appears to be a fatefully wrong decision[1].

[1] Worldwide there are very few research centers in nuclear physics left and despite a much stronger financial situation these centers face stiff budgetary challenges while trying to create relevant new research directions as astrophysics, biophysics, laser physics, nano physics etc.

We are certain that such a move would in particular be disastrous for our friends and colleagues in the Yerevan Physics Institute. This group, with activities in phenomenological high energy physics, cosmology, mathematical and statistical physics, condensed matter physics - to name only a few fields - has acquired a professional level which is acknowledged throughout the world. Even an outsider may appreciate by inspection of the records of the articles in refereed international journals the astonishing creative diversity of the Yerevan theoretical physics group.

To drastically reduce this diversity would mean eliminating an important part of the Armenian cultural heritage. On the contrary, support of the broad spectrum of activities of the theory group can be achieved with a rather moderate amount of expenditure. This support should comprise a reasonable number of fellowships for Ph.D students attached to the theory group. It consolidates an important task of the Yerevan theoretical physics group: to provide a link to the international science community for talented young Armenians.

We appeal to the Armenian government to be conscious of the intellectual excellence that Armenia possesses in the theory group of the Yerevan Physics Institute. We hope that the Armenian government will continue to support financially the existing activities of the internationally known groups in the theory department.



Alexander Belavin
Landau Institute for Theoretical Physics,
RAS
Chernogolovka, Russia

Rainald Flume
Physikalisches Institut,
Universität Bonn
Germany

Andreas Klümper
Fachbereich C Physik,
Bergische Universität Wuppertal,
Germany

Robert Schrader
Institut für Theoretische Physik
Freie Universität Berlin,
Germany