



The American Hungarian Federation

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September 13, 2017

The Honorable Rex W. Tillerson
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to express our deep concern regarding a discriminatory law passed by Ukraine's parliament stripping the ability of Hungarian children of western Ukraine* to study in their mother tongue (as well as in Ukrainian) beyond the 4th grade. That discriminatory law threatens the Hungarian minority's culture and infringes on fundamental freedoms insofar as the survival of any national minority is to a large extent dependent on its ability to preserve and cultivate its culture, especially its language. The law not only violates bilateral agreements made by Ukraine, it has unnecessarily resulted in tensions between Hungary and Ukraine.

The American Hungarian Federation ("AHF"), founded in 1906, represents a broad cross-section of Americans who trace their heritage to Central Europe. Throughout its 110 year old existence, AHF has supported democracy, minority rights in Central and Eastern Europe, a strong NATO and an open door policy toward NATO enlargement to include countries which seek and qualify for membership.

AHF believes a cornerstone of U.S. security interests in a region that has not always been tolerant of its Hungarian (and other) minorities is the protection of minority rights in accordance with Western standards and bilateral agreements.**

As a member of the Central East European Coalition ("CEEC") representing 18 national, membership-based organizations, AHF has supported and supports measures against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea. AHF also believes, however, that a democratic and tolerant Ukraine would build on the most effective measures devised by the West to strengthen the country. A weak, corrupt and intolerant Ukraine, on the other hand, would enable Russia to continue to fish in muddy waters and continue its aggressive policies.

With these considerations in mind, we are writing to respectfully urge you to publicly and unambiguously express your concern relative to Ukraine's discriminatory education law.

Most respectfully,

Frank Koszorus, Jr.
Chairman, Board of Directors

Bryan Dawson
Vice-President

*The Hungarians in Ukraine number 150,000 and largely inhabit the Zakarpattia Oblast region which was part of Hungary until the post WW I Treaty of Trianon dismembered that country. After a brief reunification, Stalin annexed the region to Ukraine in the Soviet Union.

**Hungary was the first country to recognize Ukraine's independence in 1991. The two countries entered into an agreement that, among other things, provided for the preservation of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identities of the members of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine and guaranteed that they could be educated at all levels in their mother tongue.