September 15, 2016

The Honorable Hans G. Klemm
United States Ambassador
4 – 6, Dr. Liviu Librescu
District 1 Bucharest
05118 Romania

Re: Szekler Flag and Minority Rights

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

We write to congratulate you for your moral and political courage in being photographed with the Szekler flag.

Founded over 100 years ago, the American Hungarian Federation has for decades promoted human and minority rights of Hungarians living in the countries neighboring Hungary, including Romania. *See*, http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/docs/AHF_MinorityRights_2016-09-13.pdf The use of the Szekler flag by the members of the Hungarian community in Romania is merely an expression of a belief in a better future and an exercise in what we Americans cherish and deem to be non-provocative and protected freedom of speech. Nevertheless display of that flag is virtually treated as a criminal act by the Romanian authorities.*

It is unacceptable for Romania to stifle measures by the Hungarian minority, such as using the Szekler flag, to preserve their unique culture in their ancient homeland and to overcome the effects of discrimination, persecution, and in some instances violence they have faced. Far more tolerance and adherence to Western values are needed. For instance, Romania should be strongly encouraged at long last to return communal properties, e.g., churches, that were confiscated by the Communists, to its Hungarian minority. Without further hesitation Romania should also grant the Hungarian minority its legitimate demand for autonomy to enable members of that minority to preserve their culture. Autonomy is a democratic mechanism that is successfully used in Europe. It is a form of internal self-determination that leaves borders intact, thus also promoting democracy, stability and good neighborly relations. *See,* http://www.americanhungarianfederation.org/docs/ForeignPolicyReview_Autonomy.pdf

Again, we appreciate your sensitivity and attention to these important matters.

Sincerely,

Frank Koszorus, Jr., Chairman