

Russia is increasingly active in championing the cause of the 25 million ethnic Russians living in neighbouring countries of the former Soviet Union. It has linked progress in troop withdrawals from Estonia and Latvia to citizenship and social guarantees for local Russians. In Tajikistan, Moldova and the Transcaucasus, defence of Russian minorities has been used to justify Russian military involvement.

In a 1993 amendment to the Russian Criminal Code, homosexual relations between consenting adults were decriminalized.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada firmly supports Yeltsin in his political and economic reform efforts, and welcomes the adoption of Russia's new Constitution. Canadians provided technical assistance and monitored the December 12 constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections.

Democratic development is one of the priorities of Canada's programme of technical assistance in Russia. Projects include institution-strengthening for the new parliament, training impartial public servants, the publication of a civics textbook for schools, and workshops in ethnic conflict resolution. The \$20 million Yeltsin Democracy Fellowships programme is bringing promising young officials to Canada for on-the-job training, including a grounding in the principles of equity in government services and in the workplace.