

In this task, Canada has an asset available to no other nation. We have our multicultural community. One in ten Canadians is of Soviet or East European ancestry. These Canadians enhance our prosperity and enrich our culture. But they are also a business asset, a trading asset for Canada. They know the customs. They know the decision-makers. They know the systems. And they know the languages.

Already, Sonia and Thomas Bata, the Reichmanns and Andrew Sarlos have blazed new trails into the East. But they are only the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of Canadians who are also active in pursuing new opportunities in Europe and many thousands more who have priceless talents to offer. I encourage these Canadians to exercise their natural advantages, to tell us how we can help and how we can do what we do better - and to pursue this opportunity of a lifetime.

I would like to conclude with three observations.

First, the policy I have discussed today addresses a Europe in transition. The policy itself must also evolve with the region it addresses. Europe is not static; and neither will be Canadian policy.

Second, I have described the extraordinary Canadian advantage represented by our multicultural community. That advantage also carries with it responsibilities. One of those responsibilities is this: As Europe frees itself from the shackles of the past, old animosities are re-emerging, animosities frozen by repression and made more dangerous by the absence of traditions of compromise. These animosities can threaten the very social stability which will be required if democracy there is to survive. We Canadians - all Canadians - have a responsibility to avoid fanning the flames of intolerance. We also have an opportunity to encourage compromise and accommodation - the only avenue for societies who wish to turn their back on the old ways and embrace a democratic future.

One final point. What is happening in Europe illustrates graphically today's imperative of interdependence - interdependence between countries and regions, and interdependence between issues - political, military and economic. Interdependence means opportunity. It also means challenge. Global existence today does not have an escape clause - or an escape hatch.

How we behave towards each other at home has an impact on our interests abroad. And what we do abroad determines how prosperous and safe we are here at home.

Engagement with the new Europe is not a luxury; it is a necessity. And Canada will be there, as we must, for our own sake, our own security, our own prosperity.