

Already there has been enough progress in certain areas to confirm that the expectations of Vienna were realistic. On the issue of family reunification, I am pleased to say that Canada now has no outstanding cases with Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union. With three other countries the numbers are greatly reduced. With only one country Romania, do we continue to have a large and even growing number of cases.

We know that this is not yet the end of the story; thousands of people in several countries continue to be arbitrarily prevented from leaving their country or are punished or harassed for wanting to do so. But we have seen progress and we can only encourage those governments to liberalize their laws and procedures.

When we meet again in Copenhagen, we ought to be able to say that the need for governments to intercede to allow people to be reunited with their families can be regarded as only a past chapter of history.

Another welcome new development has been that persons and organizations outside of government are increasingly free to take an active role in promoting human rights within their own countries. Some countries are so represented for the first time here. A few years ago, some of those here today, would certainly not have been allowed to leave their country to attend a meeting such as this. We salute this progress, but we also note its fragility. We urge these countries to establish a firm legal framework to ensure that the activities of such people and their ability to have contacts outside their country, will not depend on the capricious vagaries of the intermittent goodwill of government or the arbitrary judgment of officials.

Paris was the cradle of the French Revolution. It is also the city of light. In recent months we have seen the light of reform flood into formerly dark corners of Europe. We have seen the awakening of ideas of freedom where it had been suppressed.

In Poland the Round Table Agreement between the government and the solidarity movement has refreshed the hope for human rights and progress towards democracy.

In Hungary the tearing down of fenced barriers to the West has been accompanied by expanding economic and political pluralism and freedom.