



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

# communiqué

No: 46  
No.:

DIFFUSION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
RELEASE: MAY 16, 1979

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
COMMENTS ON NEW SOVIET CITIZENSHIP LAW

---

Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson said today he was sympathetic with concerns expressed by Canadians about a new Soviet citizenship law coming into effect July 1, 1979.

Mr. Jamieson said he has instructed his department to seek from Soviet authorities an authoritative interpretation of what the new citizenship law means and how it will be applied.

"I can fully understand that many Canadians might be worried about the possible effects of the new law on themselves and on their children", Mr. Jamieson said. "I am pleased to report that my officials have received assurances from both the Soviet Embassy and from Soviet authorities in Moscow that the new law is essentially a codification of old laws and regulations and will not change anything in practice."

Mr. Jamieson noted that a Consular Agreement concluded between Canada and the Soviet Union July 14, 1967 remained in force. This agreement specified that a Canadian citizen visiting the USSR on a Canadian passport furnished with a Soviet visa would not be denied permission to leave Soviet Territory merely because the matter of his citizenship is interpreted differently by the Canadian and Soviet governments.

Mr. Jamieson drew attention to the fact that Canadians of Soviet and Eastern European origin have been travelling to the Soviet Union in large numbers and for many years without encountering difficulties over their citizenship status.