

The Europe that we have known, that is, the Europe of the fifties, sixties, seventies and even eighties, no longer exists. Last year changed everything completely, and for the better.

We have all witnessed, from near or afar, the upheavals that shook much of Europe in 1989. We watched in fascination as people broke their chains and struck out toward freedom and democracy. Today, these same people are taking control of their destiny.

A new Europe is thus taking shape on the horizon, before our very eyes. In the medium term, the whole European political landscape will be redefined. The institutions of yesterday will have to be transformed; new ones will be created, and some of the existing ones will expand. All of them will have to show creativity to successfully take up the challenges of the end of the Cold War and the consequent setting in of a new climate of co-operation between nations formerly divided by an ideological East-West confrontation.

It is here that our new policy toward Europe comes into play. Three weeks ago, President Gorbachev and Mr Shevardnadze made a State visit to Canada, and we had an opportunity to speak with them about this policy. Following this meeting, I went to Copenhagen, in Denmark, to participate in the CSCE Conference on the Human Dimension, and to Turnberry, Scotland, for the meeting of NATO foreign ministers.

I mention these three events because each has enabled us to bring our analyses face to face with reality. They have given us the opportunity to determine to what extent Canadian objectives in Europe are realistic and in keeping with the role expected of us. I returned home more convinced than ever that Canada has the means to make an original and tangible contribution to the development of Europe.

This active commitment on our part does not come without a price. It constitutes the best means of ensuring that our interests are adequately protected. Nothing should be taken for granted; we must now strengthen our ties in order to consolidate our position in the Europe of tomorrow.

Canada's European policy is centred around three major institutions that encompass the diversity of our interests and are founded on our past actions on this continent. I am referring to the European Community, the North Atlantic Alliance and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, usually called the CSCE.

I would like to talk first about the European Community. Simply stated, Canada supports the accelerated process of integration in which the twelve countries are actively engaged. In our view, a more united Europe will result in stability and increased international trade.