

But our policy towards Europe hinges, as does the future of the new Europe itself, on the continued success of the reforms now underway in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Those reforms have a long way to go before promise becomes reality.

The task of simultaneously constructing democracy and an open market economy, and doing it from the ground up is unprecedented. The West has an abiding interest in seeing the East succeed. And that is why Canada has actively supported Soviet integration into the Western economic system. That is why Mr. Shevardnadze thanked me yesterday for Canada's support for Soviet membership in the new European Bank and our support for their observer state in the GATT. That is why, last year, we established a program to assist Poland and Hungary in their efforts at economic reform.

It is time for the international effort to expand to include the other new democracies emerging from the revolution of 1989. In the weeks ahead, the 24 countries which co-ordinated the program for Hungary and Poland will meet to broaden that effort to include these other countries. Canada will support this initiative and we will announce our own expanded national program in the near term. Canada is also participating fully in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Finally, we have established a Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe, which will elaborate the details of our expanded assistance program, administer it, and co-ordinate private and public sector activities. This Task Force has begun an intensive series of consultations with Canadian groups and individuals, encouraging them to participate financially and in practical, concrete ways - and asking them for their advice on initiatives we might undertake.

Mr. Speaker, assistance to Eastern Europe is not a matter of dumping large amounts of cash into the hands of these new governments. What is more important and more effective is the provision of expertise, the training of managers and decision-makers, the teaching of the tools of democracy, and the encouragement of private sector investment in specific projects and enterprises.

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. They are 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.

We want 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.

The policy I have outlined again 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.