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CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, announced today that Canada introduced two proposals this week at the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. The first deal with problems encountered by individuals applying to travel to other states. The second calls for the removal of obstacles in the way of members of ethnic minorities and regional cultures wishing to establish contacts with people in other countries with whom they have close cultural, ethnic, or linguistic affinities.

In introducing the first proposal on February 17, the Head of the Canadian Delegation, Mr. William Bauer, told the conference that its provisions were "designed to provide to individuals in certain states the assurance that petty bureaucrats will no longer be able to prevent citizens from benefitting from the undertakings which their governments made in Helsinki and Madrid. They would remove cruel and entirely needless obstacles placed in the way of individuals who wish to exercise their right to leave, or to return to, their country of origin."

The proposal calls on participating states to deal favourably and expeditiously with all applications for travel. In particular, they should:

-- give special consideration to requests from dual nationals to leave the country of one nationality in order to visit or settle in the country of their other nationality;

-- give primary importance to the wishes of those seeking family reunification in choosing where they want to settle; and

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-- ensure that applications for travel for visits or reunification with a family member who has left a country are not prejudiced by the circumstances of that family member's departure, for example where he has left without official permission.

The proposal was co-sponsored by the delegations of the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as those of Belgium, France, Portugal and Spain. It is based on proposals previously submitted in April 1986 to the CSCE Meeting of Experts on Human Contacts held in Berne, Switzerland.

In introducing the second Canadian proposal on February 18, Mr. Bauer told delegates that the proposal "is an encouragement to participating states to remove obstacles which have been placed in the way of personal or professional contacts between members of national minorities or regional cultures. The lack of contact in some countries by persons belonging to national minorities, or other ethnic or linguistic communities, with persons in other countries sharing the same language and culture is a matter of growing concern in my country." The proposal is co-sponsored by the delegations of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Turkey and the United States of America.