



Foreign & Commonwealth Office

London W1A 2AH

cyk

pleas
of course it's a long way off:
not in my political life-time. But I
don't propose to back off my earlier
remarks of 20/1.
Prime Minister

21 January 1992

This is a polite way of saying: please don't
talk about Russian membership of the EC.
Better to talk about a developing relationship
between the CIS and the EC and not mixing
off any options at this stage.

Dear Stephen,

The former Soviet Union and EC membership

Stephen
24/1

You asked for advice on which parts of the former Soviet Union might be candidates for membership of the European Community.

We have won credit in Eastern Europe by championing closer relations with the Community: our aim for the former Soviet Union must be the same. The picture is uncertain.

The Community had a Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the former Soviet Union. The Commission has proposed exploratory contacts with the republics to prepare for the negotiation of such agreements, tailored to the individual country and strengthened by political dialogue and more extensive economic and technical cooperation. Mr Hogg welcomed this approach at the EC Foreign Affairs Council on 10 January. It will permit a measured EC response, conditional on economic and political progress. A longer term aim might be Association Agreements of the form recently concluded with Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Some of the former Republics will aspire to Community membership. In every case much progress will be needed before this is a realistic possibility. Neither Russia nor the other Republics are likely to be economically (or perhaps politically) ready for membership this century. Premature accession could have huge costs for existing members.


Membership applications will also be measured against the geographic limits in Article 237 of the EEC Treaty (repeated in the Political Union Treaty) that "any European State may apply to become a member of the Community." The western Republics - the three Baltic States and Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova - could be regarded as belonging to Eastern Europe. The same is true of western Russia: St



Petersburg is a European city. Further east the position is less clear cut: Europe has traditionally ended at the Urals. Depending on the criteria used to define "Europe" - language, religion, history or culture, for example - Georgia and Armenia would qualify under some criteria but not under others; the Moslem Republics would be hard put to qualify at all.

Russia, with a population, of 147 million covering 6.5 million square miles and 11 time zones, is sui generis: a cross between a nuclear power and a developing country. As the former it would dominate the Community; as the latter it could drag it down. We shall want the Community to continue to strengthen its links with Russia, to encourage democracy and economic reform while accepting that the Community's role is limited. But full membership is a long way off.

Yours ever,


(R H T Gozney)
Private Secretary

J S Wall Esq CMG LVO
10 Downing Street