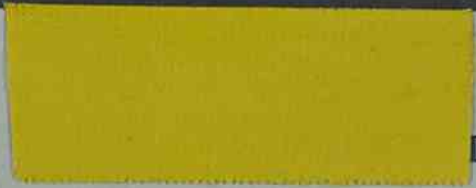


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*CPR*



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HOME OFFICE  
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE  
LONDON SW1H 9AT

1 November 1988

*Dear Charles,*

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO POLAND:  
VISAS

..... I am sorry to add to the briefing for the Prime Minister's visit, but you may like to have with you the attached background note from our Immigration & Nationality Department on the visa position for Poles, which complements that which you have already received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

I am copying this to Lyn Parker (FCO).

*yours truly*  
*Nick*

N C SANDERSON

Charles Powell, Esq.

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## VISAS FOR POLAND

### BACKGROUND NOTE

#### The problem

1. The number of visitors from Poland to the UK has been increasing substantially in recent years, by 20% since 1984 to over 46,000 last year. As a result the procedure for considering and granting visas including security and immigration checks has been put under increasing strain. This has resulted in increasingly frequent delays often beyond the period of 14 days which is that established between the UK and Poland as the norm.

#### Current position

2. The Home Office, the Security Service and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office have become increasingly aware of how unsatisfactory the former arrangements were, particularly since they were designed for a much lower level of traffic. Moreover, with the moves towards greater freedom of travel throughout Eastern Europe, it was likely that even greater numbers of East Europeans, including Poles, would be seeking to travel to this country, thereby causing even greater delays.

3. The Home Office, the Security Service and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office have therefore established a working party of officials, which is shortly to report to Ministers with the objective of devising new procedures which provide a quicker service to bona fide Polish visitors while at the same time protecting our security and immigration interests. As far as immigration interests are concerned, we have already introduced new procedures which have, over the last two months, reduced by 90% the number of visa applications which have to be referred to the Immigration Department. The issue of which applications are required to be referred for security purposes remains under discussion.

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4. The issue of the visa service to Eastern Europe has been under consideration by the Select Committee on Trade & Industry which is likely to produce a report urging streamline procedures, especially for businessmen.

5. The Prime Minister might also like to be aware that we have recently introduced new arrangements for dealing with East European visitors at our ports under which procedures previously used on a blanket basis for all East Europeans are being applied more selectively and, we believe, more effectively against particular categories of visitors identified by the Security Service for particular attention. These new procedures represent a more effective use of both Immigration Service and Security Service resources as well as enabling bona fide East European visitors to be dealt with by immigration control much more quickly.