

## **EX-SOVIET PACT COUNTRIES**

At the beginning of the Gorbachev thaw, I decided, in my capacity as Chair of the Christian-Democratic Group, to visit as many as possible of the Eastern bloc countries, to gauge the extent of the changes there. I managed this with no difficulty. Naturally - since they were interested - I explained to them what kind of conditions they would need to meet in order to improve relations with the EC or become an EC member.

I strongly pushed every time for the oppressed, the opposition, to be included in the meetings with me. I didn't just see the official ruling party, I also tried to forge links with all the opposition forces of the day - such as Václav Havel in Czechoslovakia or Solidarność in Poland - and also to do what I could to improve the impact of the Helsinki Final Act.

## **VISIT TO RUSSIA**

I travelled with my Bureau to Russia, where we were welcomed according to protocol and treated excellently in every respect, and we were able to make it clear to the Russians in our talks there how we were trying to find joint solutions with them in the three areas - military, economic and humanitarian - covered by the Helsinki accords. I was able to speak, for instance, with the Zagorsk monastery, and could see that there had already been improvements. My talks with the representatives of the Supreme Soviet etc. corroborated this.