

## Appeal to ease entry for East Europeans

### COMMERCE

THE Government has been urged to relax its restrictive immigration policy on Eastern bloc visitors to Hongkong because it is hurting trade and tourism.

Hongkong General Chamber of Commerce representative Mr Jimmy McGregor said: "Many East European businessmen have been denied entry to Hongkong or have had conditions of entry made so strict as to discourage them from coming at all.

"This has undoubtedly reduced greatly our ability to trade with these countries since reciprocity is the normal rule for international trade and market access," he added.

Mr McGregor was joined by tourism industry representative Mr Martin Barrow in seeking a relaxation of the present policy where Eastern bloc citizens are allowed in only on a case-by-case basis.

The tourism and trade sectors agree that the stringent policy has cost the territory millions of dollars in trade and international convention business, despite a thawing in relations between China and the Soviet Union.

Mr McGregor accused the Government of enforcing a policy out of deference to China which was sensitive over the entry of East European nationals to Hongkong.

Officially, Hongkong reviews requests from citizens of Soviet bloc countries on an individual basis under a policy dating from the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s.

Meanwhile, Mr Paul Cheng Ming-fun urged the Government to step up efforts to fight possible protectionist moves from the United States under a Democrat-dominated Senate.

A member of the Trade Advisory Board, Mr Cheng said Hongkong should strive to open up more overseas