

CN 199

X/13 C/S -- SWISS PUT OUT WELCOME MAT FOR CS CITIZENS

GENEVA, AUGUST 30 (RFE SPECIAL/MAHONEY) -- SWISS AUTHORITIES IN BERN ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT BY MONDAY THIS COUNTRY WILL HAVE TWO "WELCOME CAMPS" OPEN IN THE SAINT GALLEN CANTON TO ASSIST CZECHOSLOVAK AND OTHER EAST EUROPEAN CITIZENS STRANDED IN THE PRESENT CRISIS.

M.A. RIESEN, SECRETARY FOR THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND POLICE, MADE THE ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY, AFTER REFERRING TO THE DIRECTIVE OF THE SWISS FEDERAL COUNCIL, FOLLOWING THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THAT THIS COUNTRY SHOW "GENEROUS HOSPITALITY WITHOUT COMPLICATED FORMALITIES."

THE TWO CAMPS WILL BE AT BUCHS AND SAINT MARGRETHEN.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT AS OF TODAY THERE HAVE BEEN ABOUT 600 CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS IN CONTACT WITH SWISS AUTHORITIES AND THAT OF THESE, ABOUT 100 HAD REQUESTED ASYLUM. IN ADDITION, THE SPOKESMAN SAID, ABOUT A DOZEN MORE WHO HAD FLED CZECHOSLOVAKIA SINCE THE INVASION HAVE OBTAINED THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM.

THESE FIGURES ARE EXPECTED TO GROW, HE SAID, SINCE THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN INDICATIONS FROM OTHER WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES THAT CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS STRANDED THERE HAVE REQUESTED MOVEMENT TO SWITZERLAND.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THREE MONTH VISAS WILL BE ISSUED FREE OF CHARGE TO ANY SUCH EAST EUROPEAN CITIZENS AS THEY ENTER SWITZERLAND. THESE VISAS ARE RENEWABLE. AT THE END OF THEIR VISA PERIOD THEY CAN ASK TO BE GIVEN THE STATUS OF REFUGEES AND TO REMAIN, OR ELSE THEY CAN LEAVE.

MEANWHILE PRIVATE SWISS CITIZENS AND FIRMS MOVED TO HELP CZECHOSLOVAKS. THE HUGE GROCERY AND SUPERMARKET CHAIN, MIGROS, HAS PLACED 16 TONS OF BABY FOOD AT THE DISPOSITION OF THE SWISS RED CROSS FOR DELIVERY TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK RED CROSS.

MILLIONS OF TINY CZECHOSLOVAK FLAGS HAVE BLOSSOMED OUT ON SWISS CARS. THE PROFIT FROM THE SALE OF THESE FLAGS WILL GO TO AID THE CZECHOSLOVAK TOURISTS STRANDED IN THIS COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE TINY BLUE, WHITE AND RED FLAGS PERMIT SWISS DRIVERS TO EXPRESS THEIR SYMPATHY TOWARDS THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE.

THE IDEA FOR THE ACTION CAME FIRST FROM A CITIZEN OF CENTRAL SWITZERLAND. IT WAS SUPPORTED BY THE LUCERNE SECTION OF THE SWISS AUTOMOBILE CLUB. A BASEL FIRM IS TURNING OUT A THOUSAND SUCH FLAGS DAILY.

THE TOURING CLUB SWISS, THE SECOND OF SWITZERLANDS TWO AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS, IS PROVIDING COUPONS TO CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS, GOOD FOR FREE GAS.

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