

TEC set to ban visit ^{Arg} by Russian ^{25/3/94} nationalist

The Argus Correspondent

PRETORIA. -- The Transitional Executive Council is trying to bar Russian ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky from visiting South Africa at the invitation of white rightwingers here.

The TEC's management committee decided that a visit by Mr Zhirinovsky, leader of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party, would not be appropriate at this time.

Mr Zhirinovsky, whose racist and imperialist utterances have earned him international notoriety, has previously been kicked out of Bulgaria and officially barred from Germany, Australia and Rumania.

Efforts by the Conservative Party to invite Mr Zhirinovsky to South Africa started in 1992 when a CP delegation met him in Moscow.

Recent communications between Mr Zhirinovsky and two CP MPs on a proposed visit to South Africa drew the attention of the TEC's sub-council on foreign affairs, which initially decided that Mr Zhirinovsky should be allowed into the country for seven days, but not be received officially by the South African government.

However, informed sources said, the sub-council's decision was overturned by the TEC's management committee, which felt that it was not now an "opportune time" for the Russian rightwinger to visit South Africa.

Foreign Affairs Minister Pik Botha yesterday confirmed he was aware of an invitation to Mr Zhirinovksy, but said he was not sure whether the government could prevent the Russian politician from entering South Africa.

"We certainly won't receive him officially," he said.