



## Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja Prezidenta preses dienests

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### **Address by the President of Latvia, H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, at a gala dinner hosted by Frank Uhrenholt, Latvian Honorary Consul in Denmark, Copenhagen, 29 March 2001**

Mr. Uhrenholt,

Mr. Schur,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It has been a true pleasure to be so warmly received during my visit to Denmark. The genuine friendliness and welcome that I have experienced attests not only to the traditional hospitality of the Danes, but also to the excellent state of relations between Denmark and Latvia.

Denmark is without a doubt one of Latvia's closest allies. It is the largest foreign investor in Latvia and the second largest provider of foreign aid. The close partnership between our countries is also being strengthened at the non-governmental level. Denmark has maintained its position as one of Latvia's top ten trading partners, due to a steady increase in private entrepreneurial activity.

Exchanges among students, scientists, and NGO representatives are also intensifying, thanks to such active organizations as the Danish Culture Institute in Riga, which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The establishment of this institute at the end of the Soviet occupation was a courageous step and a clear signal of Denmark's interest in Latvia's destiny.

Riga, I might add, has a long history of trade and maritime links with Denmark. It is celebrating its 800th anniversary this year, and I invite you all to join in this summer's anniversary festivities.

The new Latvian-Danish project which foresees the creation of an Information Technology College in Riga is another far-reaching initiative. It promises to generate a talented pool of IT specialists who could place the entire Baltic Sea region at the vanguard of hi-tech development in Europe.

As friends and as allies, Latvia and Denmark share the goal of turning the Baltic Sea region into a prosperous, stable and secure area. Together, we are building our common future. I raise this glass to the continued strengthening of relations between Denmark and Latvia, in a genuine spirit of friendship and partnership.