



## Latvijas Republikas Valsts prezidenta kanceleja Prezidenta preses dienests

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### **Address by H.E. Dr. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, President of Latvia, at the accreditation ceremony of Sokol Gjoka, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania to Latvia, Riga, October 28, 2003**

Your Excellency,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you as Albanias Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Latvia.

I am glad that in the time since Latvia has regained its independence and Albania has recovered its freedom from dictatorship, our countries are continuing on the path of democratic reform. While these times present difficult challenges and are bringing forth radical change, our adherence to noble goals and values will ensure the sustainability of our reforms.

Your appointment to this high position of trust is a significant event in the history of relations between Latvia and Albania. The diplomatic relations that were established between our two countries more than ten years ago are now acquiring a new impetus.

Your term as Ambassador also begins at a new and significant stage in the history of my country, which is preparing for full membership in the European Union and the NATO Alliance. The persistent implementation of EU norms has fostered long-term progress in my country. Latvia aspires to play an active part in building a united Europe and to contribute to the further integration of the continent.

Latvia supports the idea expressed at the Thesaloniki Summit to foster the closer involvement of the European Union in the Western Balkans. I am glad about Albanias achievements in the course of The Stabilisation and Association Process. Latvia supports the EU initiative to apply the EU enlargement process experience to The Stabilisation and Association Process and has already begun cooperation in this regard with a few Balkan region countries. Latvia is ready to share with Albania the knowledge and experience it has acquired in the European integration process.

Latvia and Albania both wish to take part in world integration processes. Our shared foreign policy goals include integration into the EU and NATO. The successful cooperation of our two countries in the field of security policy is proof that jointly we can contribute to safety and stability in Europe and in the world. Latvian soldiers, together with peacekeepers from Albania, are honorably fulfilling their task of helping to ensure peace and security in Iraq.

While there remains a great deal of untapped potential in our countries bilateral relations, experience shows that shared goals and principles are the main prerequisites for developing and maintaining partnerships. A clear and united perception of the future provides us with ample opportunities for developing our bilateral relations.

Your Excellency,

I am convinced that your appointment as Albanias Ambassador to Latvia, at a time that is so important in the history of our both countries, will provide new potential for further bilateral cooperation between our nations. I hope that you will get to know Latvia as a modern and dynamic country that is full of opportunities and that cherishes its history and traditions.

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I wish you success and good fortune in carrying out your responsible mandate.