LATVIAN KALVITIS' GOVERNMENT, APPROVED

02-12-2004

Three-fourths of Saeima deputies voted this morning for the government of Aigars Kalvitis (People's Party, TP - EPP-ED) this morning. 75 deputies voted for the Kalvitis' government, 23 voted against it.

This will be Latvia's 12th government since restoration of independence in 1991. The new government includes four political parties - New Era (JL- EPP-ED), TP(EPP-ED), Latvia's First Party (LPP- EPP-ED) and the Union of Greens and Farmers (ZZS). These four parties signed the government declaration and the coalition agreement yesterday.

The approval of the Kalvitis' government means that the government of Indulis Emsis (ZZS) will step down.

Six ministers will represent JL in the new government - the party's chairman Einars Repse will be minister of defense, Solvita Abolina - minister of justice, Krisjanis Karins - minister of economy, Ina Druviete - education minister, Janis Reirs - information minister, Ainars Latkovskis - society integration affairs minister.

TP will also have six representatives in the government - Kalvitis as prime minister, Oskars Spurdzins - finance minister, Gundars Berzins - health minister, Helena Demakova - culture minister, Artis Pabriks - foreign minister, Maris Kucinskis - regional development and local governments minister.

From ZZS, the same ministers will retain their posts: Martins Roze - minister of agriculture, Raimonds Vejonis - environment minister and Dagnija Stake - welfare. From LPP, Ainars Slesers will be minister of transit, Ainars Bastiks - children and family affairs minister and Eriks Jekabsons - interior minister.

There will be no post of deputy prime minister in Kalvitis' government (held by LPP board chairman Slesers in the government of Emsis).

The coalition agreement says all coalition parties will share responsibility for the government's decisions. A coalition council will be set up to coordinate cooperation among parliamentary groups, that will include the prime minister, two representatives of the TP parliamentary group, and three representatives from all other ruling coalition parliamentary groups.

According to the government declaration, the priorities of Kalvitis' government in 2005 will be liquidating crisis in the health care sector, developing a balanced national budget in the medium term, curbing inflation, improving Latvia's competitiveness, ratifying the European Constitution, completing privatization.

As reported, Saeima voted against the national budget for 2005 in its first reading on October 28, therefore expressing no confidence to the government of Emsis. The ruling coalition's TP also voted against the budget.