

AIGARS KALVITIS (EPP-ED) DESIGNATED LATVIAN PRIME MINISTER

24-11-2004

Ending three weeks of anticipation, President Vaira Vike-Freiberga on Wednesday nominated Aigars Kalvitis as the next prime minister, entrusting him the task of forming a new government.

In her statement to the press, the president said she wanted Kalvitis to form a strong, majority government that would last until the end of the current parliamentary term, or October 2006.

This will be Latvia's third government this year. The outgoing one of Prime Minister Indulis Emsis, to which the People's Party is a member, has been beset with troubles since it lacked majority support in Parliament.

The president's final choice came down to either Kalvitis or Krisjanis Karins, parliamentary faction head of New Era. While expressing her respect for Karins, a U.S. citizen and linguist by training, Vike-Freiberga said she chose Kalvitis for his extensive political experience.

It was Kalvitis as parliamentary faction head who crashed Emsis' minority coalition, after he accused the prime minister of making too many promises to the left-wing forces and engaging in unsound fiscal policy. The president had expressed dismay at this move, particularly considering that the People's Party, which controlled the Finance Ministry, had drafted the 2005 budget.