

# What NATO means for us



**Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga,**  
**The President of the Republic of Latvia**

In Prague, NATO's member states made the historical decision to invite Latvia and six other former captive nations to accede to the Alliance. This was a day that Latvia and her fellow aspirant countries had been waiting for a very long time. For Latvia and her neighbours, the decision in Prague represents a vindication of the principles of international justice. It signifies an end to the last vestiges of the Second World War, which began with the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939 and which resulted in the immoral division of Europe into outdated "spheres of influence."



**Einars Repše,**  
**The Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia**

This coming year responsibility towards our allies will also increase. As NATO Member States are ready to provide us with security and independence guarantees, we also cannot step aside in the hope of avoiding responsibility and risk. We cannot expect guarantees from others if we are not ready to contribute. Next year could be a year of serious challenges for Western democracies and, if necessary, we will be committed to standing alongside our allies in meeting these challenges.