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09/03/2004 - Latvia : TSP celebrates its 10th anniversary by stressing its social-democratic identity. The National Harmony Party (TSP) stands for the values of social democracy. It supports a modern and democratic country, which is based on unity among all of its residents. This is the message that the People's Harmony Party stressed during its international conference on the new challenges for social democracy in Europe.

This event was organised together with the PES Group in Riga on the 27 and 28 February 2004 to celebrate the Party's 10th anniversary.

This conference demonstrates TSP's political will to further intensify its cooperation with the family of European Socialists. This partnership began when TSP Member of Parliament Mr **Boriss Cilevics** became the Head of the Latvian Observer Delegation in the PES Group in the European Parliament in May 2003. During the conference Boriss Cilevics stressed the need for the EU to continue to strengthen the protection of linguistic and cultural diversity. Together with Janis Jurkans, chairman of the People's Harmony Party, he reiterated the basic goals of the TSP: freedom for the Latvian people, solidarity and national harmony in the area of socioeconomic, ethnic, international, generational and personal relationships.



Boriss Cilevics, Head of the Latvian Observer Delegation in the PES Group in the European Parliament (photo: ambroise perrin GPES)

PES MEP **Catherine Guy-Quint** (France) who was participating in a TSP information session for the second time, underlined the positive outcomes brought by EU funds in terms of economic growth. Catherine Guy-Quint, a Member of the budgetary committee in the European Parliament, explained the determination of Socialists in the European Parliament to put pressure on the European Commission and national governments to increase the amount of money dedicated to economic development activities in the EU 25.

Finnish MEP **Ulpu Iivarri** (PES) stressed the importance of active cooperation between social democrats in the Baltic Sea Area on working life and social dialogue policies, environmental and transport issues. Regarding the situation of the Russian speaking population in Latvia, Ms Iivari emphasised that the wounds of the Soviet occupation and russification are deep and will take time to heal.

Rob Van de Water, coordinator of the Willy Brandt Programme, outlined the political achievements of the PES Group in the European Parliament. Mr Van de Water stressed the main differences between European Socialists and Conservatives and highlighted the importance of Latvian social democrats in contributing to stronger social democratic policies in the enlarged Union.
