

## **Conservative Friends of Turkey Hosts Pre-Launch Cocktail**

Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT) Founder Members Shadow Home Secretary Dominic Grieve MP and Shadow Minister for Justice David Burrowes MP were among the guests at the pre-launch cocktail of the CFT held on June 17 at Sofra Restaurant in Covent Garden, London.

Conservative Councillor for Enfield and founder member of the CFT, Mr Ertan Hurer, spoke of Turkey's geo-political significance to Europe and the Conservative Party's longstanding support for Turkey's accession to the European Union.

David Burrowes MP spoke of the strong relationship between the UK and Turkey, and emphasised the role the CFT would play in further deepening ties between the two countries in the future.

Chatham House Europe programme analyst Mr Fadi Hakura gave the evening's keynote speech, "Turkey: Political Challenges to Liberalisation". Mr Hakura reminded the audience of the significant reforms undertaken by the Turkish government since coming to office in 2002, but stated that the headscarf debate and the closure case against the AKP had slowed down the momentum for reform. However, he expressed optimism that the reform process would continue in Turkey and that the closure of the AKP would not spell the end of the country's drive and determination to enact the *acquis communautaire*.

Owner and chairman of Sofra International, Mr Huseyin Özer, indulged all with a medley of Ottoman dishes as members and guests toasted the establishment and future success of the Conservative Friends of Turkey.