

Conservative Friends of Turkey

For immediate release

Conservative Friends of Turkey to announce agenda at pre-launch cocktail

London, 17 June 2008 - Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT) will be hosting a cocktail reception tonight at the Sofra restaurant in Covent Garden to announce its agenda ahead of the formal launch of the group in Autumn 2008.

More than 50 guests are expected including founding members from the House of Commons, House of Lords and European Parliament, as well as representatives from the business and diplomatic communities, civil society organisations, academia and the media.

CFT promotes deeper ties between Turkey and the Conservative Party at all levels. Several parliamentary candidates, councillors and officials from Conservative Future (the youth wing of the Conservative Party) will also attend the reception.

CFT acts as an impartial source of information on a broad range of topics concerning Turkey. Tonight, as the first in a series of conferences and seminars, Fadi Hakura from the leading foreign policy think-tank The Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House) will give a speech entitled "Turkey: Political Challenges to Liberalisation".

CFT will arrange fact-finding trips to Turkey for British parliamentary delegations. Representatives in Ankara and Istanbul will soon be appointed to help with these exchanges as well as to act as permanent points of contact for efficient communication between Conservative Party members and Turkish policymakers and NGOs.

CFT takes an active interest in the developments regarding Northern Cyprus and will work to ensure that the concerns of Turkish Cypriots are effectively communicated to the Conservative Party.

CFT objectives:

CFT specifically seeks to:

- Promote strong Anglo-Turkish relations
 - Help to foster bilateral trade and business relationships
 - Build links between the Conservative Party and its political counterparts in Turkey
- Increase awareness of the Conservative Party within the Turkish community in the UK
 - Support parliamentary candidates in marginal constituencies
 - Support local Turkish politicians and promote greater political involvement by the Turkish community in British politics
- Facilitate access to information on Turkey; its culture, politics and economy
- Lobby in favour of Turkish membership of the EU with a stress on Turkey's long term role in the bloc and its region, as well as its strong ties to Western institutions

For further information:

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