

Conservative Friends of Turkey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shadow Foreign Secretary Rt Hon William Hague MP: “The Conservative Party is energetically in favour of Turkey’s accession to the European Union”

Vice Chairman of the Party Richard Spring MP: “Turkey is an important mediator in the Middle East”

Rt Hon William Hague MP, keynote speaker at the official launch reception of the Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT), emphasised the constructive role Turkey plays in the international community and the Conservative Party's longstanding support for Turkey's accession to the European Union.

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Shadow Foreign Secretary Rt Hon William Hague MP was the guest of honour at the cocktail reception hosted by the Conservative Friends of Turkey in Whitehall to celebrate its official launch on 28 October. Following a welcoming address from CFT co-founders Cllr Ertan Hurer and Dr. Onur Çetin, the launch kicked off with speeches from Hague, Vice Chairman of the Party Richard Spring MP, Shadow Minister for Europe Mark Francois MP and Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion and Social Action Baroness Warsi. More than 150 guests including the Turkish Ambassador to London HE Yigit Alpogon, Turkish Consul-General Bahadır Kaleli, Conservative Party MPs David Burrowes MP, Mark Harper MP, Peter Luff MP, Robert Key MP, David Amess MP and Conservative Peer Lord Sheikh, as well as representatives from the business and diplomatic communities, civil society organisations, academia and the media attended the launch which was sponsored by Sofra International Chairman, Huseyin Ozer.

Shadow Foreign Secretary Hague said Turkey's accession to the EU would prove that the bloc was based on shared values rather than narrow geographical and religious boundaries. He drew attention to Turkey's importance as an effective interlocutor in the international arena and reiterated Conservative Party's support for Turkey's EU membership.

Vice Chairman of the Party Richard Spring reminded the guests that as a longstanding NATO member, Turkey had been a key ally since the Cold War and emphasised Turkey's active role as mediator in the Middle East.

Shadow Minister for Community Cohesion and Social Action Baroness Warsi and Shadow Minister for Europe Mark Francois welcomed CFT's establishment, stating that the group was undertaking an important role during this critical period.



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About the Conservative Friends of Turkey (CFT):

CFT promotes strong ties between Turkey and the Conservative Party at all levels. CFT aims to be constantly in communication with its broad membership base, acting as an impartial source of information on many topics concerning Turkey. Shadow Home Secretary Dominic Grieve and Mayor of London Boris Johnson are among the founding members of CFT.

CFT has around 200 members as of October 2008, including 18 Members of Parliament, 3 Members of the European Parliament, 2 peers from the House of Lords, many Tory activists and representatives from the business and civil society organisations. CFT co-founders Cllr Ertan Hurer and Dr. Onur Çetin are the coordinators in the UK and Dr. Rıza Kadılar represents CFT in Turkey.

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