



Cross - Party Group on Turkey in the Scottish Parliament

Convener: James Dornan MSP
Deputy Convener: Gordon MacDonald MSP
Deputy convener: Hanzala Malik MSP

Secretary: Sitki Nalci
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Draft Minutes of AGM Cross Party Group on Turkey in the Scottish Parliament Room Q1.04 Tuesday 23rd February 2016, 18:15 Hrs

Present

Convener: James Dornan MSP
Deputy Convener: Gordon MacDonald MSP
Secretary: Sitki Nalci
Semih Lutfu Turgut, Consul General, Turkish Consulate General in Edinburgh
Omer Guler, Vice Consul, Turkish Consulate General in Edinburgh
John Clifford, Honorary Consul of Austria for Scotland
Dr Can Ozkan
Judy Ozkan
Mehmet Akdeniz
Belgin Davidson
Dr Chris Ferrard
Norman Rouxel
Savas Ekinli
Shelagh Demir
Professor Jim Crow

Apologies

Hanzala Malik MSP
Mary Scanlon MSP
Dr Feyza Sanver
Cllr Yen Hongmei Jin
Mehmet Mertcan
James Trolland

1. The Convener Mr James Dornan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that as this was the last AGM before the dissolution of Parliament there

would be no elections for the office bearer's positions, this would be a matter for the group if they became re-constituted in the next session of the new Parliament.

The Convener also reiterated the information regarding the process of dissolving the Group during dissolution and what was required to reconstitute the Group after the Scottish Parliament Elections in May 2016 and all the group members would be informed by the Convener and the Secretary about the reconstitution of the Cross Party Group on Turkey in the Scottish Parliament after the Elections.

2. The Minutes of the 2015 AGM were approved by the Deputy Convener Gordon MacDonald MSP and seconded by the Secretary Sitki Nalci.
3. The draft Annual Return Form was discussed by the Group. It was agreed that the report was a true reflection of the activities of the Group, that it was in accordance with the stated aims and objectives of the Group and that it provided members with a firm foundation to build on should they wish the Group to be reconstituted in the next Parliament.
4. The Election of Office Bearers was put in abeyance in accordance with the standing orders of the Standards Committee for the pending Dissolution of Parliament.
5. The Proposed Work Plan for 2016/2017

The Convener stated that most of this discussion could form the basis of the Group's work in the next Parliament. However, he also suggested that this need not be exhaustive or binding, that Members should take time during the intervening period of the Dissolution to consider additional potential activities.

The Convener considered the past year to be productive and offered a firm basis for progress into 2016 and beyond. He felt that members worked in a collegiate way and that all views, including cultural, were embraced.

The Deputy Convener agreed with the Convener's remarks and examined the lesson to be learned from the past year. He suggested that examples could be replicated from the Cross Party Group on Poland who has met in the Members Room and opened meetings up to the Polish Community and not just to the membership of the Group. This provided an open and transparent relationship between the Group and the Polish community at large and facilitated a cultural exchange.

The Consul General Semih Lutfu Turgut remarked that the Cross Party Group on Turkey had previously intended to organize a cultural event in the Parliament but due to difficulties in finding an available hall, this attempt had not been successful. He suggested that renewed efforts should be made to achieve this.

The Secretary Sitki Nalci agreed with the previous comments and added that it was a successful year for the Cross Party Group and it was a learning curve for everybody. Sub-committees were great asset for the Cross Party Group but a greater utilisation of these sub committees were needed.

The Group had a lengthy and open discussion surrounding the promotion of the Turkish language and how these efforts can be used as a catalyst in promoting cultural awareness, within and out with the Turkish community, but also between cultures.

The model that Speak Turkish has adopted was recognised as providing a good example in this field. This lead to an examination of potential sources of funding and how any subsequent programmes could be staffed, where such programmes could be situated, Glasgow was explored as an option. The strategic framework that emerged from this process was one that could provide a platform for the Turkish Community in Scotland to focus and co-ordinate their efforts in a concerted way to achieve the aims and objectives that were previously discussed during this meeting. The Consul General Turgut congratulated Speak Turkish for their hard work and bringing a visitor from the Cultural Institute in London to Edinburgh.

In summation the Convener suggested that meetings could be opened to the wider Turkish community based outside Edinburgh.

He also reiterated the view expressed earlier by some members that to have successful projects, such as Speak Turkish, research would be required to ascertain where the Turkish community were geographically concentrated, what community resources are already in existence for these communities and consult with them on what their requirements were. The Consul General Turgut informed the members that detailed preliminary research should be done in order to understand the demand for Turkish classes. The Convener suggested that this could provide the Education and Cultural Sub Committee with its first task after the Scottish Parliament Elections.

6. Before closing the meeting both the Consul General Turgut and the CPG Secretary Sitki Nalci expressed their thanks to the Convener and Deputy Convener for their work over the previous years; in providing the leadership to the Group, facilitating their discussions and access to Ministers and other invited speakers and to their staff for the administrative and organisational assistance they have provided members with.

Both the Convener James Dornan MSP and Deputy Convener Gordon MacDonald MSP expressed their thanks to the Group for their sentiment and stated their continuing support for the Group's aims and objectives, support that would continue after the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, irrespective of the impact on their own personal future.

7. Meeting closed at 8 pm.