

**Democratic Progress Institute**  
**Comparative Study Visit to Ireland**  
**Hosted by the Irish Government**

Dublin, Dundalk, Belfast  
17 – 20 July 2013

This Comparative Study Visit is the first in a series of visits to Dublin and Belfast with Members of Parliament from all of Turkey's main political parties. As with this first visit, each visit will involve three 3-day visits to Dublin and Belfast to consolidate and build on previous Comparative Study Visits organised by the Democratic Progress Institute (DPI). It is hoped that the visit will give participants the opportunity to deepen discussion on and understanding of difficult technical issues surrounding the Northern Ireland Peace Process. This visit was hosted by the Irish government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, with the kind facilitation of the Glenree Centre for Peace and Reconciliation.

What is currently happening in Turkey is incredibly important and deserves global support. DPI is pleased to have been able to organise this first visit, in what is hoped will be a successful series of similar visits to Ireland.

The aim of these visits is to provide in-depth briefings for small groups relating to conflict resolution. It is hoped that through meeting with key players in the Irish peace process, Irish members of parliament and government officials who were involved in ending the conflict through the parliamentary process there, participants in this series of visits will build on their knowledge about relevant issues, consolidating lessons already learned during previous, larger-scale DPI Comparative Study Visits, which have already taken place as part of DPI's Turkey programme.

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The first high level delegation to have taken part in this series of visits are from Turkey's Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Participants in this delegation were as follows:

- Mr. Ahmet Türk
- Ms. Aysel Tuğluk
- Ms. Gültan Kışanak
- Mr. Nazmi Gür
- Ms. Ayla Akat Ata

During the visit, participants met with key actors from the Irish peace process, including TDs (members of the Irish Parliament) from the Republic of Ireland, MLAs (Members of the Legislative Assembly) from Northern Ireland, former paramilitary and insurgent leaders from both Republican and Loyalist perspectives, key negotiators and advisors from the process, women actors, as well as officials from the Irish government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Dublin's Anglo Irish Division and Conflict Resolution Unit and the British government's Northern Ireland Office in Belfast. Speakers included Martin Mansergh, historian and advisor to former Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern during the Northern Ireland peace process and Dermot Ahern, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and heavily involved in the peace process, among others.

The agenda for this visit focused predominantly on meeting actors of crucial relevance to the delegation; participants met with individuals who could offer comprehensive accounts on issues of relevance, and provide candid and frank discussion. Chatham House rule was applied throughout the visit, which also enabled uninhibited discussion and a high level of engagement between participants and speakers.

Areas of focus during this visit included constitutional issues, how to advance negotiation, government commissions, the role of third parties in peace processes, security sector and policing reform, disarmament and withdrawal, the importance of timing within a peace process as well as governance models including devolution and decentralisation.

Of prime interest to the delegation included the interrelated topics of disarmament and key timings of a peace process, the question of prisoners and their release, governance (power sharing, devolution and decentralisation) and constitutional arrangements.