



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

This project is co-funded by



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Summary report

Supporting Inclusive Dialogue at a Challenging Time in Turkey

Youth engagement in conflict resolution processes

Edinburgh, 9-13 December 2019

From Monday 9 December to Friday 13 December, DPI held a Comparative Study Visit as part of its youth engagement series and following on from 2018's visit to Dublin and Belfast and the London and Cardiff activity earlier this year. Bringing together a group of young participants from across Turkey's many constituencies, including political party youth representatives from AKP, CHP and HDP, civil society workers, social workers, university students, academics and conflict resolution workers, this CSV completed the series of CSVs which have explored the systems of devolution in operation across the UK by visiting Edinburgh in Scotland. Participants continued their engagement with important conflict resolution principles, including how young people themselves can meaningfully contribute to resolution processes, as well as explored the unique power-sharing arrangement that's in place between Scotland and Westminster and the scrutiny it is currently facing with renewed discussion over the future status of Scotland.

The CSV began with a guided tour of the Scottish Parliament which enabled participants to hear about the modern traditions of the building and learn about the many different aspects of the devolved system in Scotland. The first session of the visit was with Russell Bain, Head of International Futures at the External Affairs Directorate and Declan MacDonald, Head of Human Rights at the Scottish Government, and they discussed the workings of devolution across the UK, with a particular focus on Scotland. They went on to discuss the Scottish Government's international priorities, outlining the separation of foreign policy powers between Holyrood and Westminster. Participants had the opportunity to discuss the Scottish government's international strategy, specifically the National Performance Framework, and its core human rights principles: human dignity, social security, children's rights and gender equality. The Scottish Government's desire to include civil society in the

decision-making was particularly underlined. The management of the relationship between the UK government and the Scottish government was also explored, from communication to negotiation, as well as the challenges that need to be addressed looking forward.

The next planned session was with Professor Ewen Cameron, Head of the School of History, Classics and Anthropology, University of Edinburgh, who provided participants a thorough overview of the history of Scotland's place in the Union. This allowed participants to fully understand how Scotland has ended up in the position it is in today through conflict, peace and power-sharing. He underlined several aspects of Scottish identity having remained distinct from the rest of the UK such as the education system, the legal system and the religious system. Discussion also led Professor Cameron to give participants an insight into the political context surrounding the General Election taking place in the UK, and the main political forces involved. In the afternoon, the group had the opportunity to engage with Sarah Boyack, Member of the Scottish Parliament (Scottish Labour). Unfortunately, a planned session with Fulton MacGregor MSP (Scottish National Party) was cancelled as he was called into the debating chamber at the time of our session. Nonetheless, participants engaged in a fruitful meeting with Ms Boyack in which she shared her experiences of working as an MSP in the devolved setting and she examined the future of power-sharing in Scotland. She also noted efforts to raise levels of inclusion within Scottish institutions, providing examples of women and youth leaders. As a follow-up to the visit of the Parliament, this meeting was a chance to understand the concrete functioning of devolution in Scotland and the day-to-day work of the Parliament.

On Wednesday 11 December, the group took part in a valuable interactive session lead by Laura Wise, Research Associate for the Political Settlements Research Programme based at the University of Edinburgh. The focus of Ms Wise's presentation was on how to increase inclusion in the changing landscapes of peace process. She outlined the lessons that can be learnt regarding inclusiveness from analysing peace agreements from the last 30 years. Particular focus was given to the inclusion of young people in such



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processes and participants discussed what barriers young people might face to meaningful participation in resolution processes. The group underlined the importance to think about inclusion not only by mentioning it in peace agreements, but at every stage of a resolution process, from cease-fire agreements to implementation of peace in practice. Moreover, they discussed inclusive mechanisms and ways of building bridges between formal tracks and grass-roots and community-based levels.

The discussions surrounding inclusiveness and youth engagement continued with Ben McKendrick, CEO of the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and Aaron McDonald, a Member of the Scottish Youth Parliament. In their presentation, they covered essential topics such as diversity among the members, children rights, democracy and the importance of political impartiality for the SYP. The group described barriers that young people may face in order to be taken seriously in the eyes of politicians and policy makers, and how these can be overcome.

On Thursday 12 December, Emily Gifford, Projects and Festival Manager at Beyond Borders Scotland, delivered a session in which she discussed their work promoting international dialogue in Scotland. She shared their experiences of using arts and culture as a means to bring diverse groups of people together and engage them in conflict resolution themes. She also discussed their programme which aims to enhance and improve the participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Participants discussed the similarities between barriers to gender inclusion in resolution processes to those faced by young people.

Nick Leake, Deputy Director of Policy, Scotland Office, subsequently met with the group to discuss the role of the Scotland Office in implementing the system of devolution and how best they can encourage collaborative working amongst the UK administrations. Participants also engaged in insightful discussions regarding Brexit and both the challenges and opportunities it will present to Scotland as more powers will potentially be devolved.



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During the afternoon we visited the University of Edinburgh to meet with United Nations House Scotland. Gari Donn, Executive Director, and three young interns joined the participants to discuss how they, as a civil society organisation, can work to promote peace and democratisation across Scotland and globally. It was particularly valuable to hear the organisation's policy regarding youth engagement in such projects, and participants heard about the many initiatives set up by young people at UN House Scotland - from organising 'Pathways to Peace' seminars to composing Parliamentary One Pagers, which informs MSPs on current key issues relevant to UN goals and values.

This CSV gave participants the opportunity to engage in discussion with key actors in the Scottish devolution story - including Scottish and UK Government officials, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Scottish Youth Parliament representatives, academics and members of civil society. By studying the Scottish case comparatively, DPI's youth group focused on the role of young people in bringing about the power-sharing as well as looking at the increasing engagement of young people in peace and democratisation processes. Participant feedback has been very positive with many remarking on the importance of being given the platform to interact over an extended period of time with such a diverse group of individuals. There were clear calls for DPI's youth programme to continue so that the dialogue and discussions do not stop at the end of this event but continue and develop through future meetings. In this way, we can help broaden the bases for dialogue and prepare the groundwork for any future resolution process in Turkey.

The comparative study visit was part of the project 'Supporting inclusive dialogue at a challenging time in Turkey', supported by the EU and the Irish, Dutch and Norwegian governments. Please refer to the gallery section of the website for photos of the events and to 'In the media' for media coverage.

If you have any questions regarding the event or the report, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to sharing further updates on DPI's activities with you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Kerim Yildiz
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