

# OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

By  
City Of Edinburgh Council

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## PRESS RELEASE

### **CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL, LABOUR GROUP MOTION, at Full Council Meeting of 17th November 2005**

*"This Council notes that a number of Parliaments around the world have recognised, as genocide, events that began in Anatolia in 1915, including, most recently, an 82% vote in favour of recognition in the European Parliament on 28th September 2005. Council also notes that recognition was acknowledged when Edinburgh hosted the UK's Annual Holocaust Memorial Day in 2003.*

***Council recognises that atrocities and tragedies occurred on all sides in the conflicts which began in 1915, but supports the view that the Ottoman actions against the Armenian community did constitute genocide.***

*Council welcomes Turkey's application for membership of the European Union and supports dialogue and reconciliation between the Turkish and Armenian peoples. Council does not support the view that genocide recognition should be made a condition for membership of the European Union".*

At the Full Council Meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council on Thursday, 17th of November 2005, the Council carried a Labour Group Motion proposed by the Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Donald Anderson, and seconded by Councillor Chris Wigglesworth, supporting the view that the Ottoman actions against Armenians during the period 1915 onward did constitute genocide.

At the said meeting of the Council, held at City Chambers, deputations from both the Turkish and Armenians sides were invited to attend the Council meeting and present arguments for and against adoption of the Motion.

Three deputations from three Turkish organisations presented arguments against the motion through their respective three speakers. The two Armenian deputations that followed the Turkish presentations were from the **Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide (CRAG)** and from the **Armenian Community & Church Council of Great Britain (ACCC)**. The speakers from the Armenian deputations were Dr Hagop Bessos, Chair of the Scottish Committee of CRAG, who presented a personal family testimony of the genocide, Dr Donald Bloxham, lecturer of History at the University of Edinburgh and author of a recent book on Ottoman Armenians and the Genocide, who presented the historical arguments in favour of passing the Motion, and Dr Harry Hagopian who concluded with both the legal and political arguments in favour of the Motion and against any allegations at denial.

Despite *en-bloc* opposition to the Motion by the Conservative Group in the Council, the Motion was carried with 29 votes in favour against 16 - a majority of 13 in favour of the Motion. The votes supporting the Motion were from the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups.

CRAG, the Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide, and its Scottish chapter headed by Dr Hagop Bessos, have been painstakingly working on this Motion for the past year. During 2005, and despite considerable political difficulties, CRAG has also been busy with a set of commemorative activities across the UK marking the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.