



BCCT VISIT TO THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT 12th – 14th MAY 2009

I was very excited and I am sure everybody in our group had the same feelings, when we entered the historical Palace and Westminster. During the course of the guided tour, we were briefed about the background of the British Parliamentary system, a system of government wherein the Ministers of the executive branch are drawn from the legislature and the head of government is both “de facto” chief executive and chief legislator.

The most interesting part of the visit was “Question Time”. Question Time is an opportunity for MPs and Members of the House of Lords to ask government ministers questions. We were able to witness the leader of the Opposition David Cameron ask the Prime Minister questions during a very sensitive time.

Although Question Time takes place at the beginning of the day’s business for up to 30 minutes, it reflects the deep rooted democratic parliamentary system idea going back to the times of Cromwell. Thanks to excellent organisation by COBCOE, we were all briefed the previous day about Parliament and How Westminster Works by an insider, and all our questions were answered. Thanks to that presentation the visit to Houses of Parliament was even more interesting.

An excellent lunch, in the Churchill Room in the Palace with the All-Party British-Turkish Parliamentary Group allowed us to learn more about their activities and how we can work more closely together.

It was an excellent experience and on behalf of our group I would like to thank COBCOE for their excellent organisation.

At the end of our tour, I asked the Chamber's Chairman Mr Duncan Blake his thoughts about our "day at the Parliament". Duncan Blake, said he watched and listened the whole procedure with great interest and added that he most sincerely hoped one day, one may witness a similar debate in the Turkish Parliament. We both hope it will not be wishful thinking.