

Dr. Garret FitzGerald was Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland from 1982 to 1987 having served as Foreign Minister from 1973 to 1977. His father played an active and influential role in Irish politics in the early years of Ireland's independence in the 1920s. Before entering politics Dr. FitzGerald worked for the Irish airline Aer Lingus and subsequently as a lecturer in economics at University College Dublin. As Taoiseach he was a strong advocate of the liberalization of Irish society. He also had to contend with a deep economic recession in the country and as the leader of a coalition government he had to pursue a course of fiscal rectitude to reduce Ireland's high national debt and take a firm control of public spending. At the same time he worked closely with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in addressing the violent situation then prevailing in Northern Ireland. He now lectures widely in Ireland and abroad on public affairs and writes a weekly column for The Irish Times. Dr. FitzGerald is an acknowledged expert and active commentator on international economic matters and on European affairs. During his visit to Athens, Dr. FitzGerald will also be addressing economic students at the University of Athens as well as being the guest speaker at a lunch co-hosted by the Hellenic Federation of enterprises (SEV) and The Hellenic Irish Business Association (HIBA).