



North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



Promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law through targeted cooperation and intercultural dialogue

**Implementation in 2011
and Programme perspectives 2012-13**

1) Objectives of the North-South Centre programme on targeted cooperation and intercultural dialogue

- To promote the values, standards and activities of the Council of Europe beyond Europe;
- To act as a political interface between the Council of Europe and non-European countries in neighbouring regions, in particular in the framework of the new Council of Europe neighbourhood policy;
- To contribute to the follow-up to the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the Report of the Group of Eminent Persons "Living in Diversity and Freedom".

2) Overview of the programme implementation in 2011

a) Policy development

Throughout 2011, the North-South Centre followed closely the developments of the "Arab Spring" in the Southern Mediterranean region. It provided contributions to the formulation of the **Neighbourhood Cooperation Priorities of the Council of Europe** for Morocco and Tunisia for the period 2012-2014. The North-South Centre is mentioned as a priority area in these documents with the objective of offering to these countries a "a platform of structured co-operation at governmental, parliamentary, local and regional authorities and civil society levels".

The **Lisbon Forum of 2011**, organized in partnership with the Alliance of Civilizations, was dedicated to "The Arab Spring: a major step towards making universal rights real". It brought together some 200 participants from over 50 countries and placed special emphasis on analyzing the situation in three countries: Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The conclusions of the Forum will lay the basis for future action in the Euro-Med region.

The Conference "**Women as actors of change in the Euro-Mediterranean region**" which took place on 24-25 October in Rome (Italy), was co-organised by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of

Europe and the Italian Parliament. In accordance with the “quadrilogue” principle of the NSC, it brought together representatives of governments, international organisations, parliamentarians, civil society, journalists but also experts on these issues to discuss not only the role of women as agents of political, economical and private changes but also the role of media as instruments for the promotion of the role of women. The conclusions laid the basis for a comprehensive set of activities for the period 2012-2014 labelled as “The North-South Women’s empowerment process”.

The Executive Director represented the Council of Europe at the “Meeting of the High Level Advisory Group for a Renewed Strategy of Intercultural Dialogue in the Emerging Mediterranean” on 21-22 November in Brussels, where he presented the report of the CoE Group of Eminent Persons “Living in Diversity and Freedom”. He also represented the Council of Europe in the “Mediterranean Citizen’s” Assembly” in Tunis on 1-4 December 2011, which brought together 150 participants from the North and South of the Mediterranean in view of discussing issues of common interest and forging a community of citizens from the region.

Cooperation with the **Alliance of Civilizations** remained a key priority of the North-South Centre in 2011. This included the Centre’s contribution to regional strategies for the Balkans and the Mediterranean and the joint organisation of the Lisbon Forum. The Executive Director of the North-South Centre will participate in the 4th Annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Doha, Qatar on 11-13 December 2011. He will play an active role in the round-tables dedicated to “youth and development: partners and agents of change”, “teaching history to change perceptions and conflict transformation” and “Intercultural Competences and Skills - What Is It All About?”.

b) Training and capacity-building

The North-South Centre, the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Anna Lindh Foundation and the Swedish Institute of Alexandria, jointly organised an explorative workshop on cooperation Opportunities for “**Teaching Intercultural Dialogue and Religious Diversity in the Euro-Mediterranean**” in Lisbon from 16-17 May 2011. The workshop gathered 36 participants representing a wide range of institutions from the Euro-Mediterranean region with the aim of fostering synergies and strengthening cooperation among stakeholders active in this field. The workshop participants defined principles for collaboration and proposed areas of joint action. As a follow-up to this workshop, the North-South Centre has agreed to contribute to the mapping of good practices in the region, the set-up of an annual workshop on education for stakeholders, as well as to the conceptualization of regional and/or national teacher training programmes.

The North-South Centre organized a **workshop on “Dialogue between and among the world’s religions”** in the framework of the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue in Baku on 7-9 April 2011, with the aim of reinforcing the exchange and discussions on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. The workshop which was co-chaired by the Executive Director of the North-South Centre brought together experts, representatives of religious institutions as well as networks for religious dialogue with the aim of hearing different points of views and discussions based on practical case studies for identifying action for the promotion of the role of the religious communities together with secular stakeholders – governments, local authorities, civil society organisations and

communities and facilitating the networking for a better dialogue and a culture of understanding and respect of other beliefs and creeds.

c) Awareness-raising

The ceremony of the 2010 North-South Prize took place on 29 March 2011 in Lisbon. The prize was awarded to Louise Arbour, President & CEO of the International Crisis Group and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, former President of Brazil. This key awareness-raising event for the promotion of human rights, democracy and solidarity values had a strong media impact in Portugal and abroad. In Portugal, the event was covered by 24 editions on television, 23 newspapers and on 8 radio channels with 15 different interventions. At the international level, the event was covered by Brazilian television and newspapers, and articles were published in newspapers and on the internet in France, Spain, the United States, Canada, Latin and South America, as well as China.

The Centre coordinated the nominations and the attribution of the 2011 “North-South prize”, which has been attributed to Boris Tadic, President of the Republic of Serbia, in recognition of his political action for the reconciliation of the Balkans and the integration of his country in the process of European construction, and to Souhayr Belhassen (Tunisia), President of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), in recognition of her long-time commitment in favour of human rights in the world, as well as for her fight for the rights of women in developing countries.

3) Programme perspectives 2012-2013

a) Policy development

The Centre will primarily focus its activities on the on-going developments in the Southern Mediterranean region and the contribution that the North-South Centre can make to efforts in this region towards democratization, the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

The Centre will provide contributions to the bilateral cooperation programmes between the Council of Europe and targeted countries in this region (Morocco, Tunisia) and will promote the “partner for democracy” status established by the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE and co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs. It will focus in particular on three priorities: promoting the role of women, fostering youth cooperation and strengthening civil society. Other activities for 2012-2013 will be defined in line with the conclusions and recommendations of the 2011 Lisbon Forum.

Building upon its expertise in the field of gender equality, the Centre will develop activities to promote women as drivers of change in the Mediterranean region, in line with the conclusions of the Rome Conference of October 2011. It will in particular establish a network of “women promoting change” in the Euro-Med region and hold national workshops in several countries of the region (in particular Morocco and Tunisia) bringing together representatives of the “quadrilogue” to advance the political agenda to empower women. On the international Day of Women (8 March), the North-South Centre

will organise in Strasbourg a round-table discussion with women promoting change in the countries of the “Arab Spring”.

b) Training and capacity-building

The Centre will carry forward its work initiated in 2011 on teaching intercultural dialogue and religious diversity around the Mediterranean. Activities in 2012-2013 will include the mapping of good practices in the region, the set-up of an annual workshop on education for stakeholders, and the conceptualization of regional and/or national teacher training programmes. History teaching will also remain an important area of action: the Centre’s activities will be defined in the follow-up to the workshop with the CoE and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA which will take place at the 4th Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in Doha in December 2011.

c) Awareness-raising

The 2011 “North-South Prize” ceremony will take place in March-April 2012. The prize will be attributed to Boris Tadic, President of the Republic of Serbia and to Souhayr Belhassen (Tunisia), President of the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH).

The Centre will coordinate the nominations and the attribution of the 2012 “North-South prize”. In view of this, the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre will hold a general discussion on the objectives, selection criteria and decision-making process of the Council of Europe’s North-South Prize at its next meeting, in spring 2012.

The above-mentioned activities, as well as the activities conducted by the Centre in the fields of global education and youth, will contribute directly or indirectly to implementing many of the recommendations outlined in the Report of Eminent Persons of the CoE “Living in Diversity and Freedom” published by the Council of Europe in May 2011.

d) Tentative calendar of activities for 2012

- 8 March** International Women Day, Round-table on “Women promoting change in the countries of the Arab Spring”, Strasbourg
- March-April:** North-South Prize ceremony, Lisbon
- Spring:** National workshops of the network of “women to promote change” in Tunisia and Morocco
- Autumn:** Workshop for stakeholders on teaching intercultural dialogue and religious diversity around the Mediterranean
- November:** Lisbon Forum, Lisbon

e) Performance indicators

- The Council of Europe includes a “youth and civil society” dimension to its bilateral cooperation programmes with Morocco and Tunisia.
- Countries of the southern shores of the Mediterranean become members of the “partnership for democracy” established by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and co-operate with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs.
- Increased number of projects and participation of women from the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

- Increased number of teachers/educators aware of and trained in teaching intercultural dialogue and religious diversity around the Mediterranean.
- Pedagogical tools are developed to introduce a multi-perspective approach to teaching and learning history in South-East Europe.

Programme evaluation should take into account the fact that the Programme Coordinator for Intercultural dialogue and Euro-Med activities has been on prolonged leave since 2009 and that activities have been and will continue to be implemented by temporary staff in 2012.