



North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



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(exists in English only)

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Friday 25 January 2008, Strasbourg

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The Chairman, Mr Claude Frey, opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the Bureau. He gave a special welcome to the two newly appointed representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Kimo Sasi and Mr Wolfgang Wodarg, who would take their seats on the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010. He thanked them for their willingness to participate at this meeting of the Bureau.

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Progress report by the Executive Director

The Executive Director, Mr Denis Huber, reported on his activities since taking up his duties on 1 December 2007. He referred to the first activities report which he had sent to the statutory body representatives in early January and said that he intended to continue sending monthly information reports until the summer of 2008, by which time the future situation of the North-South Centre would become clearer. As promised during his first address to the Executive Council in November 2007, he had started a consultation process with all the stakeholders of the North-South Centre, with a view to preparing a strategy document on the future of the North-South Centre. He had met individually with almost all of the Ambassadors of the member States in Strasbourg and was encouraged by the strong support shown by the majority of the member States. He was currently consulting with the member State Ambassadors in Lisbon. One important observation from these meetings in Lisbon was the need for the Centre to increase its visibility at national and international level.

The Executive Director also reported on the exchange of views he had held with the Conference of INGOs enjoying Participatory Status with the Council of Europe and the Parliamentary Assembly's Committees on Economic Affairs and Development and Culture, Science and Education. In addition, it was planned for the Chairman to address the Standing Conference of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in March 2008. The combined input from the consultations with all these stakeholders and partners, the staff of the North-South Centre and other members of the Council of Europe's secretariat would be reflected in the strategy document which the Executive Director would submit to the Executive Council and the Committee of Representatives in March 2008.

The Executive Director also informed the Bureau of his forthcoming working visit to Brussels during which he would meet with representatives of the European Commission to discuss joint co-operation and possible financial support to the follow-up project to the Europe-Africa Youth Summit and the project on global education submitted by the North-South Centre in the autumn of 2007. The programme of this visit also included contacts with members of the European Parliament, with a view to raising awareness on the statutory role that the European Parliament is supposed to play in the North-South Centre's Executive Council and to building prospects for renewed co-operation between the European Parliament and the North-South Centre.

The Representative of Portugal, Ambassador Américo Bárbara Madeira, pledged his country's support to the North-South Centre and agreed with the importance of co-operation with the European Commission. The Executive Director expressed his gratitude to the Representative of Portugal and the Portuguese authorities in Lisbon for their help and support, including their

assistance for high-level contacts during his visit to Brussels with the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the European Union and the Cabinet of President Barroso.

3. 2008 programme of activities

The Executive Director gave an overview of the priorities for 2008, the first of which was the strategy document on the North-South Centre. Referring to the provisional calendar of activities for 2008, the Centre would endeavour to implement the majority of planned activities but it would be necessary to prioritise according to the results of the strategic reflection and budgetary constraints. The priorities would be based on three main axes: global education, youth and intercultural dialogue. Under the global education axis, discussions were underway to prepare a draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on the recently finalised handbook on global education guidelines and standards. This would greatly help with the dissemination and promotion of this tool among the Council of Europe's member States and provide visibility for the North-South Centre. Under the youth axis, priority would be given to the follow-up project to the Europe-Africa Youth Summit. This was welcomed by the Ambassador of Portugal who encouraged the Centre to continue to build synergies and be involved in this important process. Lastly, under the intercultural dialogue axis, the focus would be on the implementation of the recommendations of the White Paper pertinent to the North-South Centre.

The Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV), Mrs Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, welcomed the Executive Director's strategic reflection. She drew attention to the importance of the Centre's institutional links with the Council of Europe as a whole, and how the Centre should align itself more closely with the Organisation's political agenda and institutional mainstreaming. This would help develop the Centre's role within the Organisation and raise visibility with its stakeholders and partners, in particular, the member States. The Representative of the Conference of INGOs enjoying Participatory Status with the Council of Europe agreed on the need for continuous contacts with the member States and their involvement in the Centre's work.

One of the representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Wolfgang Wodarg, observed that it was vital for the Centre to clearly define its medium and long term objectives, and to concentrate its work on areas to which it can bring an added value and obtain concrete results. The Executive Director confirmed that the strategy document would provide clear indicators and objectives for the short and medium term future, up to the period May 2010, when the North-South Centre would celebrate its 20th anniversary.

Both the representative of the Parliamentary Assembly and the representative of Portugal emphasised the importance and relevance of further developing the theme of good governance as one of the Centre's core objectives. The Director General confirmed that good governance was indeed one of the central pillars of the Centre's work as reflected through such activities as the Lisbon Forum in recent years. She also stressed the importance of developing the Centre's insertion into the institutional network set up by the Council of Europe with its main institutional partners, in particular, the European Union, the Alliance of Civilisations and the institutions participating in the Faro open platform on intercultural dialogue.

4. 39th meeting of the Executive Council (March 2008, Lisbon)

a. Constitution of the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010

A new Executive Council would be formed for the period 2008-2010 with the first meeting foreseen for 31 March 2008 in Lisbon. The Bureau held a discussion on the composition. With regard to the representatives from the member States, following the withdrawal of France at the end of 2007, it was necessary to adopt a new rotation system for the eight seats available to the Committee of Representatives. The Bureau endorsed the proposal presented by the Secretariat (appendix 1) and agreed with the suggestion of the Chair of the Committee of Representatives (Spain) to hold a meeting with the Committee to decide which member States would be representatives on the new Executive Council .

The Conference of INGOs enjoying Participatory Status with the Council of Europe would appoint two representatives. Regarding the other four vacant seats to be filled by other NGO representatives, the Bureau held a discussion and agreed that the selection of the NGOs should be based on three criteria: continuity; a direct link to the activities of the North-South Centre; international dimension. It was therefore decided that two seats should be offered to the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the European Youth Forum. For the remaining two seats, the Bureau instructed the Chairman and the Executive Director to examine the possibilities and make proposals to them in writing by the end of February. The Representative of the Conference of INGOs enjoying Participatory Status with the Council of Europe stated that she would welcome the choice of a southern NGO.

With regard to the parliamentary representatives, it was confirmed, as previously mentioned, that the Parliamentary Assembly had designated Mr Kimo Sasi and Mr Wolfgang Wodarg as its representatives. A letter had been sent to the President of the European Parliament requesting the designation of two members and the Executive Director would use his forthcoming working visit to Brussels to raise this question. The seat of the Representative of the European Commission would be filled by Ambassador Luisella Pavan-Woolfe, Representative of the European Commission to the Council of Europe.

Regarding the representatives from the South, the members of the Bureau agreed that the selection criteria should be based on choosing representatives from non-member States of the North-South Centre who had a strong interest in joining the Partial Agreement in the near future. The Bureau welcomed the suggestion of the Representative of Portugal to consider representatives from southern foundations. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Executive Director would explore the possibilities and make proposals to the Bureau in writing by the end of February.

The Chairman stressed the importance that the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe would be able to designate its representatives during its Standing Conference in March 2008. Mr Jean-Philippe Bozouls, Executive Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities, promised to follow up this request in the best possible way.

On the question of the Chairmanship of the new Executive Council, the Chairman stated that, in the absence of any other candidates and in the spirit of continuity and assisting the Centre during this difficult year, he would be willing to stand for election for one additional year, 2008-2009, with the clear understanding that he would transfer this responsibility to another Chairperson after this one year period.

4. 39th meeting of the Executive Council (March 2008, Lisbon)

b. Draft agenda for the 39th meeting of the Executive Council)

The Bureau took note of the proposed draft agenda for the 39th meeting of the Executive Council.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

6. Date and place of next meeting

It was noted that a new Bureau would be elected by the new Executive Council at its meeting on 31 March 2008 and, subject to the availability of its members, this new Bureau could meet on 1 April 2008, after the ceremony of the North-South Prize.

Representation of the member States on the Executive Council

Group	Member State	EC 2008-2010
Group I (2 seats)	Germany Portugal Spain	
Group II (3 seats)	Finland Greece Ireland Netherlands Norway Sweden Switzerland	
Group III (3 seats)	Cyprus Holy See Iceland Liechtenstein Luxembourg Malta San Marino Slovenia	

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Apologised

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