



North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



NSC/Bur (2008) 7
15 July 2008

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Thursday 19 June 2008, Lisbon

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 Representative of the European Commission, Mr Jérôme Legrand, attending a statutory meeting of the North-South Centre for the first time.

The draft agenda was adopted.

2. Composition of the Executive Council

i Representation of the Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

The Executive Director provided information on the latest developments regarding the follow-up to the decision taken at the 39th meeting of the Executive Council (31 March 2008) when it instructed the Chairman and the Executive Director to contact the Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to draw their attention to its concern about the gender inequality regarding the appointed representatives to the Executive Council, and to examine measures which could be taken to redress this imbalance. He confirmed that both the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament had subsequently appointed two substitutes representatives, all female, to the Executive Council. For the former, the new substitutes appointed were Mrs Maria Manuela de Melo (Portugal) and Mrs Antigoni Papadopoulos (Cyprus) and for the latter, Mrs Marie-Arlette Carlotti (France) and Mrs Madeleine Jouye De Grandmaison (France). The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe examined this question during its plenary session on 27-29 May and entrusted its Bureau to take a decision on this matter at its meeting of 27 June.

The Bureau welcomed these nominations and looked forward to receiving confirmation from the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities on its representatives at a later date.

ii Representation of civil society and the South

The Executive Director recalled the decision taken at the 39th meeting of the Executive Council (31 March 2008) when it instructed the Bureau to take the necessary steps with a view to filling the two remaining vacant seats of the Executive Council, namely, one civil society representative and one representative from the South.

With regard to the civil society seat, the Executive Director proposed the nomination of Mrs Erna Hennicot-Schoepges. He explained that Mrs Hennicot-Schoepges was not only a well known member of the European Parliament, but also the Chair of the European Institute of Cultural Routes and, following renewed discussions with her, she had confirmed her interest in taking a seat on the Executive Council. This new partnership with the European Institute of Cultural Routes would enable the Centre to develop its work in this area. The Bureau welcomed this proposal and agreed to nominate Mrs Hennicot-Schoepges as the 6th and final civil society representative on the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010.

Following an exchange of views regarding the last seat for a representative from the south, the Bureau decided to leave this seat vacant for the time being. It was decided that the annual prize winners of the North-South Prize should be invited to attend meetings of the Executive Council from now on.

iii Invitation to international organisations which have signed a Co-operation Agreement with the Council of Europe

Following a proposal made by the Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV), Mrs Gabriella Battaini, the Secretariat proposed to the Bureau to invite international organisations which had signed a Co-operation Agreement with the Council of Europe of relevance to the work of the North-South Centre to future meetings of the Executive Council. The Bureau welcomed this proposal and agreed to it. At the date of the meeting, the organisations concerned were: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Alliance of Civilisations and the International Organisation of La Francophonie. This list would be completed according to future developments: in particular, the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the Council of Europe informed the Bureau of the prospect of having a co-operation agreement between the Council of Europe and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) signed in the near future.

3. North-South Prize 2008

The Bureau took note of the decision taken by the Jury at its meeting earlier that day to award the 2008 North-South Prize to Mr Jorge Sampaio (Portugal) and HM Queen Rania Al-Adullah (Jordan) and entrusted the Chairman and the Secretariat to follow this matter as appropriate.

The Bureau also requested the Secretariat to prepare draft rules of procedure for the Jury of the North-South Prize in good time before the Jury meeting.

Finally, following a discussion on the statue currently presented as the North-South Prize, the Bureau entrusted the Executive Director to take the necessary steps to arrange for a new prize to be created possibly through a national or international competition, in the context of the North-South Centre's 20th anniversary.

4. 2008 programme of activities

The Executive Director provided information on the key developments and main activities which had taken place since the last meeting of the Bureau in April 2008, as presented in the interim report covering the period 1 January – 15 June 2008. These included the 50th meeting of the Committee of Representatives (18 April 2008, Strasbourg), the “Encounters of Tangier” (25-26 April 2008, Tangier), the 5th Africa-Europe Training Course for youth organisations (31 May-7 June 2008, Coimbra) and the launching of the Global Education guideline at the Conference “Intercultural education in development education” (Ljubljana, 9-10 June 2008), organised in the framework of the Slovenian Presidency of the European Union.

In addition, the Executive Director reported on his working visit to Brussels (7-8 May 2008) and his meetings with European Commission officials, as well as his contacts with the European Parliament, the Secretariat of the EU Committee of Regions and the CONCORD civil society

platform. The focus of his discussions with the European Commission officials was the proposal to set up a joint management agreement between the North-South Centre and the European Commission in the fields of global education and Euro-African youth co-operation, with funding amounting to 300 000 EUR per year over a three year period. He informed the Bureau that this agreement had been endorsed by the EU member states at the beginning of June and then transmitted to the European Parliament for possible comment/amendment. Subject to the successful completion of this last step and to final bilateral and internal consultations, it was expected that the proposal would be finalised during the summer and that the joint management agreement would be signed in September or October. The Representative of the European Commission confirmed that the joint management agreement had been endorsed by the EU member States and was currently going through the approval process. The Bureau welcomed these developments, in particular the renewed relations with the European Commission and the prospect of the signature of the joint management agreement.

The Representative of Spain welcomed the efforts and progress made by the new Executive Director, in particular with regard to the intensified co-operation with the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV) and other Council of Europe departments. He suggested that this co-operation could acquire a more strategic approach in the future with a clear identification of priorities and a consideration of the southern dimension. He also added that his authorities would be willing to consider being associated with concrete proposals of co-operation from the North-South Centre in the future. In addition, he referred to the new European Resource Centre on education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural education in Oslo and encouraged the Centre to co-operate closely with this partner with whom the Centre could share many synergies.

The Representative of Portugal emphasised the importance for the Centre to continue and develop its recent efforts to focus on the Council of Europe's core objectives. This, he felt, would help strengthen the Centre's prospects for enhanced co-operation with the European Commission. He also pointed to the importance of maintaining and developing the southern dimension in the Centre's work.

The Bureau also examined the calendar of activities for the remainder of 2008 and the Executive Director provided information on the preparations underway for forthcoming activities. These included the seminar on "Cultural Diversity and the media" (23-24 June 2008, Lisbon), the 9th University on youth and development (14-21 September 2008, Mollina), the joint conference on education and intercultural dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly (16-18 October 2008, Cape Verde) and the introductory/awareness-raising conference on the Council of Europe and the North-South Centre (24-25 November 2008, Jerusalem).

In addition, the Executive Director presented a concept paper on one of the North-South Centre's key permanent processes, the Lisbon Forum, which will take place in Lisbon on 10-11 November 2008. He explained that, for 2008, there was a plan, in partnership with the Alliance of Civilizations, to launch a new process devoted to a particularly topical issue, "the principle of universality of human rights and its implementation at international and regional level". This theme was endorsed by the Executive Council and the Committee of Representatives of the member States at their spring meetings. Several high level representatives, including the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the High Representative of the United Nations for the Alliance of Civilisations, the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the European Court of Human Rights have already confirmed their participation. It was planned to invite other high level representatives and parliamentarians and a wide range of

human rights experts from Europe, Africa, the Americas, the Middle East and Asia. The Bureau welcomed and endorsed the concept paper. The Representative of Portugal stressed the importance of ensuring an appropriate participation from the south.

5. Activity logframe and budgetary prospects for 2009

The Executive Director presented the activity logframe for 2009 which had been prepared as one global logframe in order to ensure precision and clarity. He explained that the full programme of activities for 2009 would be prepared during the summer months for examination by the member States and the Executive Council at their autumn statutory meetings. The Bureau took note of the activity logframe for 2009.

With regard to the preparation of the 2009 budget, the Executive Director confirmed that there would be no increase to the fixed contributions of the member States. He referred again to the proposed joint management agreement with the European Commission which, if concluded, would give the Centre a sound financial basis for implementing an ambitious programme of activities for the next three years.

6. Co-operation Agreement with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Under this item, the Bureau examined the draft co-operation agreement proposed by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. This draft agreement follows the recommendation contained in the report prepared by Mrs H el ene Lund, on behalf of the Culture and Education Committee of the Congress (CG/CULT (12) 1) in 2005, to conclude a co-operation agreement with the North-South Centre. The agreement, based on the one signed between the North-South Centre and the Parliamentary Assembly in 2005, aims at further developing working relations between the two bodies and encouraging common action on areas of joint interest.

The Bureau warmly welcomed the prospect of further developing co-operation with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. Following an exchange of views, it approved the draft co-operation agreement as amended (document: NSC/Bur (2008) 6) and entrusted the Chairman and the Executive Director to forward the proposed draft to the Secretariat of the Congress with a view to finalising it as soon as possible. It is expected that the Co-operation Agreement will be signed at the next plenary session of the Congress in December 2008.

7. Prospects for co-operation between the North-South Centre and the Association of Local Democracy Agencies

The Chairman explained that, following his contacts with Mrs Antonella Valmorbidia, Director of the Association of Local Democracy Agencies (LDAs), who had expressed her interest in exploring the possibilities of collaboration with the North-South Centre, the Association of Local Democracy Agencies has sent a proposal of collaboration to the North-South Centre, recently approved by the Administrative Board of the LDAs. The Bureau welcomed the prospect of collaborating with the Association of Local Democracy Agencies, took note of the proposal of collaboration, and entrusted the Chairman and the Secretariat to continue to follow this matter.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**1. The Representative of Switzerland**

Mr Claude Frey, Chairman of the Executive Council
 Route des Clos 108, CH-2012 AUVERNIER
 tel +41 32 732 96 90 mobile +41 792507000
 fax +41 32 732 96 97 e-mail claudes.frey@bluewin.ch

2. The Representative of Spain

Mr Pablo DESPORTES, Deputy to the Permanent Representative,
 67 allée de la Robertsau, F-67000 STRASBOURG
 tel +33 3 88 24 60 50 fax +33 3 88 36 01 83

3. Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly

Mr Kimmo SASI, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly
 Eduskunta, FI-00102 HELSINKI
 tel +358 9 4321 fax +358 9 432 22 74 e-mail kimmo.sasi@eduskunta.fi

4. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Mr Jean-Philippe BOZOULS, Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities
 e-mail jean-philippe.bozouls@coe.int

5. Representative of the Conference of INGOs

Mr Michel JULIEN, Chairman of the North-South Dialogue and Solidarity Grouping of the
 INGOs enjoying Participatory Status with the Council of Europe
 e-mail mmjulien@yahoo.fr

6. Representative of the European Commission

Mr Jérôme LEGRAND, Desk Officer in charge of relations with the Council of Europe,
 Directorate General of External Relations, Unit B3.
 tel +32 2 2991750 fax +32 2 2958081 e-mail jerome.legrand@ec.europa.eu

SPECIAL GUEST**Portugal**

Ambassador Américo MADEIRA BARBARA, Permanent Representative
 11 rue Fischart, F-67000 STRASBOURG
 tel +33 3 88 60 16 77 fax +33 3 88 60 70 42

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT**North-South Centre**

Mr Denis HUBER, Executive Director

Mrs Fifi BENABOUD, Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue and Transmed programme

Mrs Gordana BERJAN, Co-ordinator for Education and Youth

Mrs Paula SMITH, Principal Administrative Assistant

Mr Miguel SILVA, Programme Manager for Global Education

Mr Marcos ANDRADE, Programme Manager for Youth Co-operation