



North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



NSC/MS (2009) 6 final
11 August 2009

Report of the 52nd meeting of the Committee of Representatives of the member States

(17 April 2009, Strasbourg)

1. Adoption of the draft agenda

The Committee of Representatives of the member States adopted the draft agenda as it appears in document NSC/MS (2009) 1.

2. North-South Prize 2008 Ceremony / 41st meeting of the Executive Council (16-17 March)

Under this item, the Executive Director reported on two key events, the 2008 North-South Prize Ceremony and the 41st meeting of the Executive Council which had taken place on 16 and 17 March respectively.

The 14th North-South Prize Award Ceremony took place on 16 March in Lisbon. The Prize was awarded to HM Queen Rania Al-Abdullah (Jordan) and Mr Jorge Sampaio (Portugal). The ceremony took place in the Portuguese Parliament, with the participation of the President of the Republic of Portugal, Mr Cavaco Silva, the Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mrs Maud De Boer-Buquicchio, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, and the President of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, Mr Jaime Gama. The Ceremony received huge media coverage, on television and radio and in the press across Europe and in the Middle East. This coverage of course provided very high visibility for the Council of Europe and the North-South Centre. A summary video of the Ceremony was shown to the Committee of Representatives. The Committee noted with satisfaction the success of the 2008 North-South Prize Ceremony and welcomed the high visibility given to the North-South Centre and the Council of Europe, as a whole, on this occasion.

The 41st meeting of the Executive Council took place on 17 March 2009 in Lisbon. On that occasion, the Executive Council warmly welcomed the accession of Serbia and the return of Italy to the North-South Centre, which entered into force on 1 and 15 March respectively, thus enabling the participation of both countries at the North-South Prize Ceremony and the meeting of the Executive Council.

In addition, the members of the Executive Council had noted with regret the confirmation given by the Chair, Mr Claude Frey, that he would not continue to chair the Executive Council beyond 31 March 2009. They unanimously thanked Mr Frey for his hard work, commitment and support to the Centre over the past five years. As a follow-up, the Executive Council elected Ms Deborah Bergamini, Representative of Italy, as its Chair (with effect from 1 April 2009), and Ambassador Eberhard Kölsch, Permanent Representative of Germany to the Council of Europe, as its Vice-Chair (with immediate effect).

The Committee of Representatives of the member States took note of the decisions taken by the Executive Council at its 41st meeting of 17 March and congratulated the new Chair of the Executive Council, Mrs Deborah Bergamini, Representative of Italy, and the new Vice-Chair, Ambassador Eberhard Kölsch, Permanent Representative of Germany to the Council of Europe, on their election, for the Executive Council's remaining term of office ending in spring 2010. It also expressed its gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Mr Claude Frey, for his commitment, hard work and effective leadership over the last five years.

The Executive Council had also entrusted the Secretariat to prepare draft rules of procedure, in line with the discussions on a new statutory resolution for the NSC and with a view to the constitutive meeting of the new Executive Council in spring 2010.

With regards to the requested rules of procedure, the Representative of Finland made the following declaration:

"Our delegation would like to draw your attention to the decisions made by the Executive Council in Lisbon and especially decision no. 3.3. concerning the importance of preparing draft rules of procedure for the Centre to be considered and decided at the latest in spring next year. Clear rules will make procedures such as selecting Member states to the Executive Council and electing chairpersons to various bodies of the Centre transparent and would indeed make the work of the Centre more efficient as a whole."

The Committee of Representatives of the member States took note of the declaration of Finland which was supported by the Representatives of Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. The Representative of Italy took this opportunity, on behalf of the new Chair of the Executive Council, to apologise for her absence at the present meeting. He transmitted her hope to meet with the Representatives of the member States in the near future. The Representative of Italy also supported the proposal for clear rules of procedure regarding the Chair of the Executive Council but did nevertheless remind the member States that the outgoing Chair had given early notice of his intention to stand down in March 2009, permitting the members of the Executive Council to evoke the request for rules of procedure regarding the election of the Chair at an earlier stage.

3. Information by the Chair and the Executive Director on other recent developments

The Chair opened this item by warmly welcoming the representatives of Serbia and Italy present at the meeting, and congratulating the representatives of Serbia on their country's accession to the North-South Centre and the Representative of Italy on his country's return to the Centre, which entered into force on 1 and 15 March respectively.

The Representative of Serbia thanked the Chair for his warm welcome. She referred to the participation of the Minister of Youth and Sport of Serbia, Ms Snezana Samardzic-Markovic, at the meeting of the Executive Council and the North-South Prize Ceremony on 16-17 March, and her working visit to the North-South Centre to discuss projects for co-operation.

The Representative of Italy expressed his satisfaction at the decision of his country to rejoin the North-South Centre. As a founding member of both the Council of Europe and the North-South Centre, it was a political and strategic imperative for Italy to return to the Centre.

The Chair was also pleased to inform the Committee of Representatives of the official request of Morocco to become a member of the North-South Centre which came through a letter of 20 March 2009, addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Morocco, Mr Taïb Fassi Fihri. This request was based on the "advanced status" negotiated between the European Union and Morocco in October 2008, on the choice of King Mohammed VI in favour of democratic openings, the reinforcement of good governance and the promotion of human rights, as well as the already existing fruitful co-operation between Morocco and several bodies of the Council of Europe, in particular the Venice Commission. It also followed the contacts established with the North-South Centre for many years already.

In this context, the Chair gave a special welcome to Mr Mohammed Alaoui Belrhiti, Consul General of Morocco in Strasbourg and Mr Abderrahim Kadmiri, Vice-Consul General, present at the meeting. The Consul General expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the warm welcome shown to his country by the Committee of Representatives and the Council of Europe as a whole. He perceived Morocco's accession to the North-South Centre as a means of unifying nations and enabling Morocco to promote the values of the Council of Europe in the south. He hoped that co-operation with the North-South Centre would contribute to helping the most vulnerable from the south and lay foundations for future generations.

The Representative of the Holy See confirmed his country's approval of the request of Morocco to join the North-South Centre. The Representatives of Italy, Portugal and Spain congratulated the General Consul on his country's decision to request to join the North-South Centre. The Representative of Italy added that this accession boded well for the future of the Centre and would ensure a widening of its stakeholders and future mission. The Representative of Spain said that Morocco's accession would further enrich the work of the Centre.

The Committee of Representatives of the member States welcomed the official request of Morocco to become a member of the North-South Centre, turning into reality the legal possibility for non-European countries to join the Centre and reinforcing the role of the Centre as the interface between the Council of Europe and its neighbouring regions, in particular, the south Mediterranean region. It also welcomed both the decision in principle taken by the Committee of Ministers on 16 April and the positive opinion given by the Representative of the Holy See at the present meeting concerning Morocco's accession to the NSC and noted that, as a consequence, the invitation addressed to Morocco to join the NSC would take effect on 22 April 2009. It encouraged the Moroccan authorities, in liaison with the Secretariat, to confirm the formal accession date as soon as possible.

Following this, the Executive Director gave a brief summary of the recent main activities of the North-South Centre including, in particular, the launch events of the three year Joint Management Agreement signed between the European Commission and the North-South Centre (Africa-Europe Youth Co-operation Programme, 4 February, Lisbon, and the global education programme, 23-24 March, Budapest), the Conference "Status and political participation: women, actors of change in the Mediterranean region" (Lisbon, 2-3 April). He referred to the written information on these and other activities contained in his monthly reports for the months of January to March 2009 (docs: NSC/Inf (2009) 7, NSC/Inf (2009) 8 and NSC/Inf (2009) 9).

The Committee of Representatives took note of the oral reports of the Chair and the Executive Director, as well as of the written information contained in the Executive Director's monthly reports from January to March 2009 NSC/Inf (2009) 7, NSC/Inf (2009) 8 and NSC/Inf (2009) 9).

4. 2008 Activities report

The Committee of Representatives of the member States took note of the 2008 annual report of activities as it appears in document NSC/Inf (2008) 8 final.

5. 2009 calendar and programme of activities

The Executive Director presented the interim activities report covering the period 1 January – 15 April 2009 as it appears in document NSC/Inf (2009) 10 prov 2) and provided information on the forthcoming activities currently under preparation.

He reported, in particular, on his participation at the 2nd Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations (5-7 April, Istanbul) and the co-ordination role which had been entrusted to the Centre in the new initiative "Restore trust, rebuild bridges" launched on that occasion. The aim of the initiative is to overcome the trauma created by the Gaza crisis through the joint action of international organisations and major non-state players working in the Mediterranean and Middle-East region.

The Representative of Germany asked for more clarification on the exact role of the Centre in this new initiative. The Executive Director replied that he would be having a working meeting with the UN High Representative, Mr Sampaio, to discuss the details of the Centre's role. The Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (DGIV), Mrs Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, underlined the unique opportunity this role offered to the North-South Centre and how this was just one example of the new partnerships the North-South Centre was developing. Following an exchange of views, the Committee of Representatives took note of the information provided by the Executive Director on his participation at the 2nd Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations (Istanbul, 6-7 April), including the offer of giving the North-South Centre a co-ordinating role in the new initiative "Restore trust, rebuild bridges" launched on that occasion. It was also agreed under item 7 of the agenda that more information would be provided by the Executive Director on the Centre's role at the next meeting.

Following this, the Chair welcomed Ambassador Jacques Huntzinger, responsible for the cultural projects in the "Mission pour la Méditerranée" recently created under the authority of the President of the French Republic. Ambassador Huntzinger had agreed to participate at the meeting of the member States to present the "10 Mediterranean cultural projects" adopted at the "Etats Généraux culturels méditerranéens" in Marseille in November 2008 and to have an exchange of views on the follow-up of this initiative launched under the recent French EU Presidency.

Ambassador Huntzinger explained the background to this initiative and provided information on the various steps and meetings leading to the identification of the "10 Mediterranean cultural projects" and an Action Plan for their implementation. He also spoke of the Council of Europe's involvement in these projects and welcomed the recent co-operation being developed with the North-South Centre on a number of them, including history teaching in the Mediterranean. The Director General emphasised the importance of this project and welcomed the added value and southern mediterranean perspective the Centre could bring to this and other projects.

During the exchange of views that followed, the Representative of Portugal welcomed the Centre's role in this initiative while the Representative of Germany asked for clarification on the exact role of the Centre in this process. The Representative of Spain advised caution in the choice of projects with which the Centre would be associated.

Finally, also under this agenda item, the Committee of Representatives was invited to select the theme for the 2009 Lisbon Forum. The Executive Director presented document NSC/MS (2009) 4 which contains proposals on a possible theme for the Forum, based on the preliminary shortlist made by the Executive Council at its meeting of 17 March. The three themes shortlisted were:

- i. Human rights as a basis for the integration of cultural diversity
- ii. Security and freedom
- iii. Creating a culture of human rights through education

and the Executive Council took the decision to entrust the choice of final theme to the Committee of Representatives.

Following an exchange of views and "tour de table" on the preferred choice of each member State, the Committee of Representatives agreed that the 2009 Lisbon Forum theme would be "Creating a culture of human rights through education".

In conclusion to this agenda item, the Committee of Representatives of the member States took note of the provisional calendar of activities for 2009 and the interim activities report as they appear in documents NSC/Inf (2009) 2 prov 3 and NSC/Inf (2009) 10 prov 2, respectively and took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the implementation of past activities and preparation of forthcoming activities.

6. 20th Anniversary of the North-South Centre

The Executive Director provided information on the ideas and preparations for the NSC's 20th anniversary which will take place in 2009/2010. The timetable for the celebrations will be November 2009 (20th anniversary of the creation of the Centre by decision of the Committee of Ministers in Strasbourg) to May 2010 (20th anniversary of the setting up of the Centre in Lisbon). This period coincides with the Swiss Chairmanship of the CoE Committee of Ministers and with the end of the present Executive Council mandate.

In conformity with the strategic document adopted in spring 2008 by the Centre's statutory bodies, the main project for the 20th Anniversary is to prepare a new statutory resolution confirming the relevance and the role of the North-South Centre as the main instrument designed to promote CoE action and values beyond Europe, through education, youth co-operation and intercultural dialogue. As discussed previously, the decision of the CoE Parliamentary Assembly (which took the initiative of launching the North-South Campaign in the 1980s and was the leading force behind the creation of the North-South Centre) to prepare a report on the future of the NSC during the year 2009 offers an ideal framework in this respect. The Committee of Economic Affairs and Development of the Parliamentary Assembly has designated its member, Mr Kimmo Sasi (Finland), as rapporteur. Mr Sasi has been a member of the Executive Council since 2004.

One idea that had been launched for the 20th Anniversary was to honour the winners of the North-South Prize since its creation in 1994. The possible ways of doing this would be to prepare a prestigious publication where the Prize winners could contribute with a reflection about their engagement in North-South solidarity and in human rights promotion in the world, preferably through an original text. A special reunion of the Prize winners could be held in spring 2010 in Lisbon, during which the publication would be officially presented.

Additional ideas included the preparation of a video clip / short movie highlighting the Centre's main achievements since its creation, which could be coupled with a reference publication covering the period from spring 1984 (when the PACE Conference "North-South : Europe's role" was held in Lisbon) to the end of 2009.

The Executive Director also presented the 20th Anniversary logo, which was using the existing NSC logo and building on the figure "20". This project had been inspired by the logo used for the CoE 60th Anniversary, as both logos would in a number of cases be used together. It will be

completed with the motto “One world, our world”, inspired from the motto used for the CoE’s North-South Campaign in the late 1980’s.

The Executive Director recalled that, at its meeting of 30 January, the Bureau held a preliminary discussion on the proposed ideas and the general feeling expressed was that the 20th Anniversary was a great opportunity for the Centre. Following this, the Executive Council discussed the Secretariat’s proposals as contained in document NSC/EC (2009) 3, at its meeting of 17 March.

The Executive Council had welcomed the prospect and timetable of Mr Sasi’s report on the future of the North-South Centre, and entrusted the Chair and Executive Director to continue the dialogue with the Rapporteur and the Economic Committee of PACE so that the process leading to the preparation of a new statutory Resolution for the North-South Centre could make substantial progress in 2009. With regard to other proposed preparations contained in document NSC/EC (2009) 3, it held an exchange of views and entrusted the Committee of Representatives of the member States and the Bureau to finalise the preparations and report back to it at its next meeting in November 2009.

During the exchange of views that followed, the Representative of Germany supported the proposed preparation of a new statutory resolution to which he hoped the Committee of Representatives would be able to contribute. He also welcomed the proposed logo and video clip. He however expressed reservations concerning the proposed protocol reunion which he felt was out of proportion to the event in question. The Representative of Switzerland also felt that a more modest and symbolic event would be more appropriate, while also questioning the necessity and added value of the proposed publication. The Representative of Spain suggested that the Centre take advantage of the activities already foreseen for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary, for example the annual summer university on youth and development in Mollina. Concerning the celebration of a special big event, as proposed by the Secretariat of the Centre, he said that visibility and budgetary implications should be considered: visibility was indeed good for the Centre and, concerning the budgetary implications of the event, the Representative of Spain would prefer a more modest and symbolic event in case there were serious constraints for the Centre. The Representatives of Greece and Norway expressed similar views. The Representative of Italy, supporting the suggestions of the Secretariat and welcoming the Anniversary as an opportunity to raise visibility about the Centre, advocated a dynamic approach regarding the use of the additional contributions coming from new member States. This opinion was also shared by other Representatives.

The Committee of Representatives made a number of suggestions regarding the Anniversary including the idea of holding a writing competition for young people in the context of both the 20th Anniversary of the Centre and the 60th Anniversary of the Council of Europe (suggested by the Representative of Germany) and the idea of awarding the 2009 North-South Prize to someone in their 20’s (suggested by the Representative of Italy). The Representatives of the Holy See and Portugal also felt it would be a good idea to associate youth with the Anniversary celebrations.

The Executive Director thanked the members of the Committee of Representatives for their comments and suggestions. He explained that the aim of the proposed enlarged Prize Ceremony event was to create a network of past winners to help raise awareness of the Centre. He also felt the 20th Anniversary was a fitting occasion and way to pay tribute to the past presidents of the Centre and others who have been instrumental in the Centre’s history. The Representative of

Luxembourg took this opportunity to express his agreement with the idea of reuniting the past prize winners but not extending the event to other personalities.

Responding to suggestions made by the Representatives of Germany and Switzerland that the North-South Prize should only be awarded to lesser known individuals, the Executive Director explained that all nominations were considered by the Jury and that, thanks to the Centre's network established through its work in the fields of youth and women's rights, less known individuals had been nominated and indeed been awarded the Prize in the past. In recent years, the Jury had felt it more appropriate to select more known individuals, with the aim of providing visibility for the Centre. The Representatives of Italy, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and Portugal agreed with this strategy for visibility.

Following this exchange of views, the Committee of Representatives of the member States entrusted the Bureau to finalise the preparations at its meeting of 26 June 2009, taking into account the discussion held at the present meeting.

In addition, under item 7 of the agenda, it agreed to transfer 25.000 euros from the ordinary budget to the special account as a donation for the 20th Anniversary.

7. Budgetary adjustments following the accession of Serbia and the return of Italy

The Executive Director recalled the decisions taken by the Executive Council at its meeting of 17 March 2009, when it:

- warmly welcomed the accession of Serbia and the return of Italy to the North-South Centre, which entered into force on 1 and 15 March respectively (...);
- entrusted the Committee of Representatives of the Member States, at its meetings in April and October 2009, to make the appropriate arrangements concerning the impact of the accession of Serbia and Italy on the 2009 budget of the North-South Centre (...).

In line with these the decisions, he presented the Secretariat's proposals for the budgetary adjustments to the Committee of Representatives as they appear in document NSC/MS (2009) 3. The total amount of the obligatory contributions from Serbia and Italy, in the budgetary framework fixed for 2009, is close to 173,000 euros. The proposals for the expenditure of these additional funds focused on three aims, firstly to reinforce the Centre's structural capacity, secondly to face the Centre's growing responsibilities and thirdly, to prepare for the 20th Anniversary of the Centre.

With regard to measures contained in chapter I ("Reinforcing the Centre's structural capacity"), these were endorsed by the Committee of Representatives, subject to an ad referendum procedure requested by the Representatives of Germany and Switzerland which later expired without objection.

With regard to the measures contained in chapter II ("Facing the Centre's growing responsibilities"), the Committee of Representatives agreed to resume its discussion on these proposals at its next meeting. This would inter alia mean that more detailed information would be available on the North-South Centre's role in the Alliance of Civilisations new initiative (see item 5 above).

Finally, with regard to the measures contained in chapter III (“Preparing the future – the 20th Anniversary of the NSC”), the Committee of Representatives agreed to transfer 25.000 euros from the ordinary budget to the special account as a dotation for the 20th Anniversary of the NSC and to resume its discussion at its next meeting.

8. Representation of the member States in the Executive Council

The Chair reminded the Committee of Representatives that, following the withdrawal of Malta from the Partial Agreement on 31 December 2008, there was a vacant seat in Group III (see appendix 1) of the member State representatives on the Executive Council. He asked the member States concerned to signal their interest and possibly hold consultations, with a view to a nomination being made at the next meeting of the Committee of Representatives of the member States.

9. Chair of the Committee of Representatives of the member States

The Committee of Representatives of the member States, having noted that Ambassador Eberhard Kölsch will cease his functions of Permanent Representative of Germany on 30 June 2009, expressed its gratitude to its Chairman for his commitment, hard work and efficient leadership over the last year. It elected Ambassador Athanassios Dendoulis, Permanent Representative of Greece to the Council of Europe, as Chairman, as from 1 July 2009.

It was agreed that the post of Vice-Chair, which is now vacant, should be filled at the next meeting.

10. Any other business

There was no other business.

11. Date of next meeting

The Committee of Representatives of the member States agreed to hold its next meeting on Friday 16 October 2009. In the meantime, following contacts between the Secretariat, the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Executive Council, a new date has been chosen:

Friday 2 October 2009.

Representation of the member States on the Executive Council

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

* At its 41st meeting of 17 March 2009, the Executive Council allocated a seat to Italy, on an exceptional basis.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**CYPRUS**

Mr Demetris SAMUEL, Deputy Permanent Representative

FINLAND

Mr Petteri KOTILAINEN, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

GERMANY

Ambassador Eberhard KÖLSCH, Permanent Representative

Mr Heinrich HAUPT, Deputy Permanent Representative

GREECE

Mr Dimitrios KARABALIS, Deputy Permanent Representative

HOLY SEE

Monsignor Aldo GIORDANO, Permanent Observer

ICELAND

Apologised

IRELAND

Mrs Mary CONNERY, Deputy Permanent Representative

ITALY

Antonio VERDE, Deputy Permanent Representative

LIECHTENSTEIN

Ambassador Daniel OSPELT, Permanent Représentation

LUXEMBOURG

Ambassador Ronald MAYER, Permanent Representative

MONTENEGRO

Mr Ivan IVANISEVIC, Deputy Permanent Representative

NETHERLANDS

Ms Martine OUWENS, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

NORWAY

Mrs Turid KONGSVIK, Deputy Permanent Representative

PORTUGAL

Ambassador Américo MADEIRA BÁRBARA, Permanent Representative

SAN MARINO

Ms Michela BOVI, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

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Mrs Mirjana ARSIC, Advisor, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Sector for Youth

Mr Aleksander TOMIC, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

SLOVENIA

Ms Tanja MLJAC, MFA Slovenia, Council of Europe Task Force

Mr Tine RUS, Trainee

SPAIN

Mr Pablo DESPORTES, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

SWEDEN

Ms Ylva REISNERT, Trainee

SWITZERLAND

Mrs Béatrice SCHAER, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

OBSERVERS

ARMENIA

Ambassador Zohrab MNATSAKIAN, Permanent Representative

Mr Arman HOVHANNISYAN, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

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Mr George-Wilhelm GALLHOFER, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

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Mr Marat KANGARLINSKI, Deputy Permanent Representative

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Mrs Natalja LUTS, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

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Mr Luc SEROT-ALMERAS, Deputy Permanent Representative

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Mr Mohammed ALAOUI BELRHITI, Consul General

Mr Abderrahim KADMIRI, Vice-Consul General

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Ms Inga BOLEK, Trainee

ROMANIA

Mr Costin Horia ROGOVEANU, Deputy to the Permanent Representative

SPECIAL GUEST

Ambassador Jacques HUNTZINGER, Mission for the Mediterranean, Presidency of the French Republic

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT

Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport

Mrs Gabriella BATTAINI-DRAGONI, Director General

Private Office the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General

Ms Stefania KRUGER, Adviser

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

Mr Jean-Philippe BOZOULS, Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities

Budget, Financial Information Management, Accounting and Linguistic Services Department

Ms Françoise PRINZ, Head of Service

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North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Mr Denis HUBER, Executive Director

Mrs Paula SMITH, Senior Administrative Assistant