



# North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



NSC/EC (2008) 8  
11 April 2008

## **REPORT OF THE 39TH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Monday 31 March 2008 (Lisbon)

## **1. Opening of the meeting**

The Chairman, Mr Claude Frey, opened the meeting and welcome the members of the Executive Council, in particular those who were attending for the first time. He gave a special welcome to the Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the Council of Europe, Ambassador Zoran Jankovic, and congratulated him on his country's accession to the North-South Centre on 1 March 2008.

Apologies had been sent by Mrs Annelise Oescheger, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and Professor Ben Turok, Representative from the South. The Permanent Representative of San Marino to the Council of Europe, Ambassador Guido Bellatti Ceccoli, had also apologised for his absence and had sent a letter for distribution to the members of the Executive Council confirming his authorities' continued support to the North-South Centre (appendix 1).

The Chairman warmly thanked the Head of the European Commission Representation in Lisbon, Mrs Margarida Marques, for offering the North-South Centre the use of the Commission's prestigious meeting room facilities and for her presence at the meeting. During her intervention (appendix 2), Mrs Marques underlined the importance attached by the European Commission to its co-operation with the Council of Europe, as shown through the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Council of Europe and the European Union in May 2007, and its wish to continue to strengthen this co-operation in the future. She also referred to the financial support the European Commission had offered to the North-South Centre for joint projects in the field of education and youth, with a specific reference to the Africa-Europe Youth Summit which took place in December 2007.

The Representative of Montenegro took this opportunity to thank the Executive Council for its warm welcome and expressed his country's pleasure in joining the North-South Centre. He welcomed the new opportunities for co-operation this accession would offer Montenegro and looked forward to his country's integration into the activities of the North-South Centre in the coming months.

## **2. Formal constitution of the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010**

The Executive Director explained that, under this item, the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010 would be formally constituted. Referring to document NSC/EC (2008) 2, he outlined the steps which had been taken in the composition process.

On 18 January 2008, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe sent letters to the relevant authorities asking them to designate members for the new Executive Council by the end of February 2008.

At its 49<sup>th</sup> meeting (22 and 25 February 2008), the Committee of Representatives of the member States appointed Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Malta, the Netherlands, San Marino, Spain and Switzerland to represent them in the Executive Council.

In January, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe appointed Mr Kimmo Sasi and Mr Wolfgang Wodarg as its representatives and in March, the European Parliament appointed Mr Ryszard Czarnecki (Poland) and Mr Alain Hutchinson (Belgium) as its representatives.

In his letter of 26 March 2008 to the Secretary General, the President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities advised that the three representatives from the previous Executive Council (Mr Jean-Claude Freçon, Mr Carlos Pinto, Mrs Ludmila Sfirloaga) would continue in the new Executive Council until the next Plenary Session of the Congress (25-27 May 2008), when new representatives would be appointed. He also advised that the seat left vacant following the departure of the fourth previous representative, Mr Ken Bodfish, would now be filled by Mr Yavuz Mildon, President of the Chamber of Regions. The four substitutes appointed by the Congress were Mr Günter Krug, Mr Hans-Ulrich Stöckling, Mr Alan Lloyd and Mr Ian Micallef.

In January, the INGO Conference of the Council of Europe appointed its Chairperson, Mrs Anelise Oeschger, and the Chair of the North South Grouping, Mr Michel Julien.

Confirmation was also received from Ambassador Pavan-Woolfe, Representative of the European Commission to the CoE, that she would participate in the new Executive Council.

The Executive Council took note of the nominations made by the Committee of Representatives of the member States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The Chairman drew the attention of the Executive Council to the formal request submitted by Mrs Annelise Oeschger, President of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, on the issue of gender balance regarding the representations 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. As a follow-up to the discussions held on this issue, the Executive Council 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.

With regard to the remaining four seats for civil society representatives, the Executive Director explained that the Bureau had agreed, at its meeting of 25 January 2008, to invite the European Youth Forum and the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), both previously represented, to take two seats. For the other two seats, the Bureau had entrusted the Chairman and himself to make proposals. As a follow-up, and after having established the necessary contacts, the Chairman had proposed to invite the European NGO confederation for relief and development (CONCORD) to take one seat. Discussions were still ongoing with regard to the last vacant seat.

The Executive Council formally appointed the European Youth Forum, the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) and the European NGO confederation for relief and development (CONCORD) as civil society representatives on the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010 and entrusted the Bureau to take the necessary steps with a view to filling the last vacant seat.

With regard to the representatives from the South, the Executive Director explained that the Bureau, also at its meeting of 25 January 2008, entrusted the Chairman and the Executive Director with the task of exploring the possibilities. As a follow-up, and after having established the necessary contacts, Professor Ben Turok, member of the South African Parliament, who has been a member of the Executive Council since 2004 and Mr Habib Ben Yahia, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union, with whom the Chairman had fruitful contacts during his visit to Morocco in February 2008 were proposed by the Chairman. This was accepted by the Bureau

and Professor Turok and Mr Ben Yania have since been formally invited by the Secretary General to sit on the Executive Council.

The Executive Council took note of the nominations by the Secretary General of Professor Ben Turok and Mr Habib Ben Yahia as representatives from the South on the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010. As discussion were still ongoing regarding the third vacant seat, the Executive Council entrusted the Bureau to take the necessary steps with a view to filling it.

The composition of the Executive Council as constituted on 31 March 2008 appears in appendix 3.

### **3. Adoption of the draft agenda**

The Executive Council adopted the draft agenda as it appears in document NSC/EC (2008) OJ1 rev.

### **4. Information by the Chairman on recent developments**

The Chairman of the Executive Council, Mr Claude Frey, gave an oral report on his recent activities for the North-South Centre.

He began by reporting on the meeting of the Bureau which took place on 25 January in Strasbourg during which the main points of discussion were the composition of the new Executive Council for 2008-2010 and the programme of activities for 2008. On that occasion, he had stated that 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.

On 12-14 March, the Chairman participated in the spring session of the Chamber of local authorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in Malaga (Spain). On this occasion, he presented the North-South Centre and made an intervention on the theme "City Diplomacy". The objective of his participation was to increase awareness of the main priorities of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, so that the links between the Congress and the North-South Centre could be strengthened and new co-operation prospects explored.

During the Congress meetings in Malaga, the Chairman had contacts with Mrs Antonella Valmorbida, Director of the Association of the Local Democracy Agencies who expressed her interest in exploring the possibilities of collaboration with the North-South Centre. She had accepted the Chairman's invitation to attend this meeting of the Executive Council for an exchange of views but had been forced to cancel her participation at the last moment.

The Chairman continued by reporting on his visit to Morocco in February. He explained that, following the plenary discussion by the Parliamentary Assembly on the report on co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Maghreb countries prepared by the Mrs Durrieu (France), and the subsequent adoption of Recommendation 1825 (2008) which explicitly mentions the prospects of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia to become members of the North-South Centre, he paid a working visit to Morocco on 4-8 February 2008 to build on this political momentum.

His list of official contacts included Mr Dahmane Derham, Mayor of Tanger, the Secretary General of the Governor of Tanger, Mrs Touria Jabrane, Minister of Culture, Mr Youssef Amrani, Director General for bilateral relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Habib Ben Yahia, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union, Mr Omar Bahrawi, Mayor of Rabat, Mr Abdelouahed Radi, Minister of Justice and President of the Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. He also had a long telephone conversation with Mr André Azoulay, adviser of King Mohamed VI. During these contacts, the Chairman presented the mandate and main activities of the North-South Centre and highlighted the importance and advantages of accession to the Partial Agreement. His visit confirmed the interest of Morocco to develop its working relations and co-operation with the North-South Centre and the Chairman received a generally positive feedback on the question of accession to the North-South Centre.

The Chairman thanked Ambassador Samir Arrour, Ambassador of Morocco in Lisbon, for having accepted his invitation to participate at the meeting of the Executive Council. Ambassador Arrour welcomed the Council of Europe's interest in strengthening co-operation with Morocco, as highlighted by its adoption of Recommendation 1825 (2008) and Mrs Durrieu's comprehensive report on co-operation with the Magreb countries. He also looked forward and offered his support to the Euro-med Encounters on migration and intercultural dialogue being organised by the North-South Centre on 25-26 April in Tangier and hoped that this could become an annual event.

The Chairman informed the Executive Council that he would follow up his contacts with the Moroccan authorities. He also confirmed his intention to have similar working visits to Algeria and Tunisia in the course of 2008.

The Executive Council took note of the Chairman's oral report on recent developments in the North-South Centre.

Finally, the Executive Director took this opportunity to inform the Executive Council of the voluntary contributions received from Portugal in March 2008 (23,900 euros) and from Slovenia in December 2007 (9,150 euros). The Executive Council welcomed this information and expressed its gratitude to the Slovenian and Portuguese authorities.

## **5. Election of the Chair of the Executive Council**

On behalf of his authorities, the Ambassador of Switzerland in Lisbon, Mr Rudolf Schaller, proposed Mr Claude Frey as Chairman of the Executive Council. The Executive Director confirmed that no other nominations had been received.

The Executive Council, on the basis of this proposal and in light of Mr Frey's confirmation that he was willing to continue to chair the Executive Council for the next year, which would be decisive for the North-South Centre, re-elected Mr Claude Frey (Switzerland) as its Chairman.

It also agreed to put the issue of the Chairmanship of the Executive Council on the agenda of its 2009 spring meeting, in connection with the preparation of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the North-South Centre.

## **6. Election of the other members of the Bureau of the Executive Council for the period 2008-2010**

According to Article 6.1 of the statutes of the North-South Centre (Committee of Ministers' Resolution (93) 51), "the Executive Council shall elect for a period of two years from among its members a Bureau composed of a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons and four members, whilst ensuring that two of them are governmental representatives and that parliamentarians, NGOs, local and regional authorities and the South are each represented on the Bureau as well as the Commission of the European Communities."

The Executive Council agreed that the composition of its Bureau for the period 2008-2010 would be as follows:

- Switzerland (Representative of the Committee of Representatives of the member States, Chair)
- Spain (Representative of the Committee of Representatives of the member States)
- Mr Kimmo Sasi (Parliamentary Representative)
- Mr Yavuz Mildon (Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe)
- Mrs Annelise Oeschger (Civil society representative).

It welcomed the fact that the European Commission would occupy its seat in the Bureau either through Mrs Pavan-Woolfe or, in her absence, Mrs Marques.

It also decided to leave the seat of the representative from the South in the Bureau vacant for the time being, and entrusted the Chairman and the Executive Director to follow up this issue until its next meeting in November 2008.

## **7. Strategic document on the future of the North-South Centre**

The Executive Director explained the background information to the Executive Council which had led to the preparation of the strategic document on the future of the North-South Centre. He recalled that, at the last meeting of the Executive Council on 15 November 2007, he undertook to consult with all the stakeholders of the North-South Centre on the priorities and future of the Centre and to prepare a strategic document reflecting both the outcomes of these consultations and contacts and his strategic vision for the future of the Centre. Following this commitment, he had carried out a large number of consultations and contacts and had drafted the strategic document taking the results of these discussions into account. The document was sent to the Executive Council on 12 March 2008. The Executive Director was very encouraged by the strong support he received from the North-South Centre's stakeholders during this series of consultations and contacts. He also welcomed the very positive feedback he had received from the Executive Council and the Committee of Representatives on the monthly reports he had been sending them since December 2007.

The Executive Director presented his strategic document on the future of the North-South Centre starting with an analysis of the recent and past problems of the Centre, and then presenting his vision of the specific assets of the Centre and the opportunities offered by the current international context, as well as the possible priorities for future action. In his opinion, the Centre needed to develop its strong points by building on the successful processes in which it was already engaged and increasing the political dimension and visibility of its work. This could be attained by ensuring the Centre fulfilled its potential role offered by the Council of Europe's White Paper on

Intercultural Dialogue, which should be adopted at the Committee of Ministers' Ministerial Session in May 2008. This could also be achieved through the Centre's two proposed joint programmes currently being discussed with the European Commission, one on the follow-up of the Europe-Africa Youth Summit and the other on global education. In addition, the recent launch of the process which could lead to the adoption of a recommendation on global education by the Committee of Ministers could enhance the Centre's visibility and political dimension, as would the 2008 Lisbon Forum, the proposed theme for which was "the universal principle of human rights and its implementation at international and regional level".

The Executive Director also insisted on the need for the Centre to have a more balanced annual calendar of activities, concentrating on around five key activities, in parallel to its contributions to other processes. To this end, he proposed that the annual North-South Prize Ceremony be moved from spring to the month of January. A more even spread of activities would permit the Centre to work more efficiently and allow time to be devoted to building synergies with its stakeholders and highlighting the added value of its activities.

With regard to the financial situation of the Centre, the Executive Director explained that the member States had not been asked to compensate the shortfall in budget following the recent departures of France and Italy and that the Centre's programme budget would indeed triple if it received the requested funds from the European Commission. He also pointed to the "double identity" of the North-South Centre and its activities which reflect the priorities of all of the Council of Europe's member States and not just its own members. In view of this, he intended to take the necessary steps to explore the possibility that some contribution could be made from the general budget of the Council of Europe towards the Centre's activities and staff expenditure.

The Executive Council warmly welcomed the strategic document on the future of the North-South Centre and congratulated the Executive Director on his work. It welcomed and supported the proposals and orientations contained within, in particular the political approach adopted by the Executive Director, with more efficiency and visibility as the key targets.

The Representative of Portugal thanked the Executive Director for the strategic document and commented that the mandate and objectives of the North-South Centre were still as valid and important today as almost twenty years ago when it was created. He reaffirmed his country's continued support to the Centre and hoped the Centre would regain its credibility and increase its visibility in the years ahead.

The Representative of the Netherlands welcomed the strategic document, in particular the way in which it addresses the real issues facing the Centre and offers clear priorities for the future.

The Representative of the European Youth Forum also welcomed the clear priorities for the future outlined in the document and the increased link with the Council of Europe's current priorities. He also confirmed that Africa was a high priority for the European Youth Forum and hoped that the Centre would further develop its work in this area in the future.

The Representative of Finland congratulated the Executive Director on the transparency of the strategic document and confirmed her country's continued support to the North-South Centre.

The Representative of Switzerland also congratulated the Executive Director on the strategic document and his extensive consultations and contacts. He felt it was very important to increase the visibility of the Centre.

The Representative of the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe welcomed the strategic document and looked forward to future joint co-operation activities in the Mediterranean and Maghreb region, building on the successful co-operation of the past.

The Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly welcomed the strategic document and while he agreed with the approach of continuity, he suggested that the Centre could also brainstorm on new ideas in the future. He also stressed the importance of showing the added value of the Centre's work.

The Representative of Germany thanked the Executive Director for his forward-looking strategy presented in the document. In reply to his question on the reason for adopting an approach of continuity, the Executive Director explained that this was the wish expressed by the North-South Centre's stakeholders during his rounds of consultations and contacts; nevertheless, there were several new elements coming into the programme, for example, the recommendation on global education and the new proposed theme for the Lisbon Forum. He agreed with the representative of Germany's comments on the importance of broadening and improving its financial base and he undertook to keep the Executive Council informed on progress regarding the Centre's applications to the European Commission for two joint programmes and his discussions with Headquarters in Strasbourg. He also confirmed that receipt of funds from the European Commission would permit the Centre to invest more in the field of education and youth. With regard to the Global Education Network Europe (GENE), he stated that the Centre was currently re-establishing its contacts with this network, with a view to exploring possibilities of renewed co-operation and mutual trust.

The Executive Council formally took note of the strategy document and approved the guidelines for future action by the North-South Centre proposed in the document. It also entrusted the Secretariat to adapt the 2008 programme of activities as necessary, and prepare the 2009 and 2010 programme of activities and budgets in line with the proposed guidelines, and also in light of the discussions held on this matter.

## **8. 2007 Annual report of activities**

The Executive Director referred to the 2007 annual report of activities, the majority of which had been carried out by his predecessor and the North-South Centre team before he took up his duties in December 2007.

The Executive Council took note of the 2007 annual report of activities, as it appears in document NSC/Inf (2008) 6.

## **9. 2008 Programme of activities and prospects for 2009**

The Executive Director explained that, in addition and complementarity to his strategic document, two "concept papers" had been prepared on the two pillars of the Centre's activities, education and youth on the one hand, and intercultural dialogue, on the other.

Mrs Gordana Berjan, Co-ordinator for youth and education, presented the "concept paper" on education and youth, explaining the framework for this area of work and highlighting the main objectives and planned activities. This included the consultative process on the recommendation on global education to be presented to the Committee of Ministers for adoption, the pan-European conference on strategies, policies and perspectives on global education planned for 2010, a new programme for strengthening global education targeted at new EU member States

and the annual global education week. With regard to youth, the key priorities were the Africa-Europe Youth Summit, the pilot programme for Africa-Europe youth co-operation in 2008-2009, the annual University on youth and development and a consolidation of the euro-african dimension in the field of youth.

At the request of the Representative of Germany, the Executive Director provided more information on the proposed recommendation on global education. He explained that the North-South Centre would lead this initiative with the assistance of the Council of Europe's Directorate of Education and it hoped to associate all relevant partners in this process, in particular the European Commission and the GENE Network.

Mrs Fifi Benaboud, Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue and the Transmed Programme presented the "concept paper" on intercultural dialogue, explaining the background of the Centre's work in this area, the programme's different dimensions, the main objectives and planned activities. She highlighted the important political dimension of this work, reflected in the role offered to the Centre in 2007 for the consultation process during the elaboration of the Council of Europe's White Paper on intercultural dialogue, and the role it would play in implementing the recommendations of the White Paper after its adoption, foreseen in May 2008.

Another priority area of work would be to develop co-operation with the Portuguese-speaking African countries, in particular Cape Verde and Mozambique. The Executive Director added, in reply to a question from the Representative of Germany, that this co-operation was not yet sufficiently developed and was a logical process of the Centre's work, especially in view of the Centre's host country's privileged partners and links with these countries.

The Executive Council took note of the two concept papers on Education and Youth, and Intercultural Dialogue, as they appear in documents NSC/EC (2008) 5 and NSC/EC (2008) 6.

Also under this point, the Executive Director gave a brief presentation of the main activities carried out by the Centre between January and March 2008. The Executive Council took note of the activities report covering the period January – March 2008, as it appears in document NSC/Inf (2008) 8.

In addition, the Executive Director provided information on the very recent conference on "Conflict resolution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century", that the Centre had committed itself to organise jointly with the African Institute of South Africa (ISA), on 26-28 March 2008 in Johannesburg. In spite of substantial preparation difficulties, due to the absence of the Co-ordinator for Euro-Africa Dialogue, the Centre had succeeded in maintaining its contribution and had provided a parliamentary dimension to the conference. Furthermore, Mr Gianni Buquicchio, Secretary of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, made a presentation on the NSC's contribution to North-South relations and on the role of the Venice Commission in conflict resolution.

This was the first event organised in the framework of a new co-operation agreement between the North-South Centre and the ISA, which was concluded in December 2007 by an exchange of letters between the Directors of AISA and the North-South Centre.

## **10. Opinion of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre on Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1825 (2008) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries**

Following the information provided earlier by the Chairman on this working visit to Morocco and the exchange of views held with the Ambassador of Morocco in Lisbon, the Executive Director provided background information to the Executive Council on the draft opinion contained in document NSC/EC (2008) 4.

On 23 January 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 1825 (2008) and Resolution 1598 (2008) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries, on the basis of the report prepared by Mrs Josette Durrieu (France).

At its 1017<sup>th</sup> meeting on 6 February 2008, the Committee of Ministers invited the Executive Council of the North-South Centre to give an opinion and comments on this recommendation, to be taken into consideration in the draft reply the Committee of Ministers will adopt at a later stage. The deadline given by the Committee of Ministers was 15 April 2008.

The Executive Council examined the draft opinion on Recommendation 1825 (2008) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries, as it appears in document NSC/EC (2008) 4 and adopted it, with the inclusion of an amendment proposed by the Representative of Portugal. It also entrusted the Secretariat to forward it to the Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers and to follow this matter as appropriate.

## **11. Any other business**

There was no other business.

## **12. Date and place of next meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in November 2008 in Lisbon, in conjunction with the Lisbon Forum. The exact date would be communicated to the members of the Executive Council.



*Rappresentanza Permanente della  
Repubblica di San Marino  
presso il Consiglio d'Europa*

Prot. NS/ P 9462

Strasbourg, 27 mars 2008

Monsieur le Directeur Exécutif,

Comme je vous l'ai communiqué par ma lettre du 17 mars dernier (Prot. NS/P 9450), il est pour moi absolument impossible de me rendre à Lisbonne le 31 mars et le 1<sup>er</sup> avril prochain. J'en suis vraiment désolé, surtout en considérant l'importance de la réunion du Conseil Exécutif et la remise du Prix du Centre Nord-Sud. Je vous écris à nouveau car, malgré mon absence, je tiens à confirmer le plein soutien de mes Autorités aux activités du Centre Nord-Sud, et de vous féliciter pour les résultats remarquables que vous et votre équipe êtes en train d'obtenir. Vous savez que, selon mes Autorités, le Centre de Lisbonne est un outil de grande importance dans la promotion du dialogue interculturel et interreligieux, donc dans un des domaines d'action fondamentaux prévus par les décisions adoptées lors du Sommet de Varsovie, en mai 2005.

Concernant la discussion sur l'avenir du Centre, à l'ordre du jour de la réunion du 31 mars, je voudrais vous exprimer mon soutien personnel, ainsi que celui de mes Autorités, aux orientations proposées dans le document stratégique que vous m'avez envoyé début mars.

Je voudrais également vous informer que je suivrai personnellement, et avec le plus grand intérêt, les développements futurs des activités du Centre qui se dégageront de la mise en œuvre de ces orientations, et à ce propos je vous confirme ma pleine disponibilité à participer activement aux prochaines démarches à accomplir dans ce sens.



*Rappresentanza Permanente della  
Repubblica di San Marino  
presso il Consiglio d'Europa*

Je vous serais très reconnaissant de bien vouloir faire distribuer cette lettre aux participants à la réunion du 31 mars.

En vous souhaitant plein succès dans vos activités, je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Directeur exécutif, l'expression de ma considération distinguée.

Guido BELLATTI CECCOLI  
Représentant Permanent

**Monsieur Denis HUBER**  
Directeur exécutif  
Centre européen pour l'interdépendance et la solidarité mondiale  
Lisbonne



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL COMMUNICATION  
REPRESENTATIONS IN THE MEMBER STATES  
**LISBON**

North-South Centre meeting in Lisbon, 31 march 2008

Margarida Marques HoR of the EC Representation

Good morning everybody,

It is a pleasure for me to receive you in the premises of the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal.

The origin of the North-South Centre, goes back to the mid-1980s. A Conference on the theme “North-South: Europe’s role” was held in **Lisbon** in 1984 under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. A proposal for a European Campaign on North-South interdependence and global survival was contained in the **Lisbon Declaration** adopted by 250 parliamentarians attending the Conference. At the end of the Campaign, the Portuguese authorities proposed to set up a permanent structure in **Lisbon** and so established a Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity.

In 1989, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Resolution establishing the North-South Centre on the basis of a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe. In June 1993, the Committee of Ministers adopted a Resolution confirming the Centre’s continuation.

Here we are again, in **Lisbon**, in, I’m sure, a new important meeting for the future of the centre. I red your intensive agenda and I understood that it will be a very important meeting.

The European Commission has good cooperation with the Centre and we are very interested to strengthen these cooperation.

The Centre has in the past received funding from Commission to carry out joint projects in the area of youth and education. The last common initiative has been the organization of the Africa-Europe Youth Summit which took place in Lisbon in December 2007, during the Portuguese presidency and with the support of the Aga Khan Development Network, in Lisbon.

The North-South Centre was a partner in the organisation of the Africa-Europe Youth Summit, an initiative co-funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The Summit had two aims: (a) to contribute to the EU-Africa Summit which took place later in the week, and (b) to strengthen co-operation between African and European youth organizations. It was a very important and successfully side event during the Africa-EU summit. It was opened President of the Republic of Portugal; the President Barroso and Portuguese PM spoke at the closing session. I had the pleasure to be there also and I could felt the very very good ambiance there.

The Commission should welcome strengthening cooperation with the North-South Centre in the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed last year between the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Mr Denis Huber, Director of these Centre was received by the President Barroso's cabinet as well as DG AIDCO and DG RELEX responsables.

As I understood, the **2008 Lisbon Forum** will discuss, as a follow-up, the role of human rights institutions in the elaboration and implementation of national human rights plans. National human rights institutions from Europe, Southern Mediterranean countries and Africa will gather in Lisbon to promote the role of human rights institutions and to strengthen the established network of national human rights commissions, as well as to favour the exchange of good practices.

The relation between the Commission and the Council of Europe appears as **very good**, as illustrated by the 300 meetings in Strasbourg attended on a yearly basis (in average) by Commission officials. The joint-projects implemented by the two organizations in many Council of Europe member states also clearly demonstrate the **concrete** nature of the cooperation (end 2007, 40 joint programmes were ongoing for a total value of 56 Mio €, with an average EU contribution of 78%; 5 new projects - for a total of 2 Mio € - to be financed under the EIDHR, have been approved by the Commission early December).

The Commission position is that since the European Union and the Council of Europe share the same values, mainly the promotion and protection of **human rights**, the promotion of **democratic values** and of the **rule of law**, it is all the more important that the two organisations work together. Such cooperation should be based on **complementarity and coherence**, should bring **added value**, and should rely on each other's strengths for the benefit of all Europeans.

The enlargements of the EU (now 27 out of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe), and the development of the competences of the EC especially in the JLS area, introduced new challenges

After very intense negotiations, efforts on both the EU and the Council of Europe side, a **Memorandum of Understanding** (MoU) on cooperation between the two organisations was signed in may 2007.

As far as **implementation of the Memorandum** is concerned, the Commission takes it very seriously. Cooperation is likely to be enhanced in the field of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Cooperation of the Commission with the Venice Commission is likely to improve. Other areas for improvement include: the newly established Fundamental Rights Agency; intercultural dialogue on the occasion of the EU Year 2008 of Intercultural Dialogue; and of course the European Convention on Human Rights, once the Reform Treaty is ratified and a legal basis for EU accession exists. The opening of a Commission office to the Council of Europe, which could contribute to the reinforcement of the relations between the two organisations, will be an improvement.

Finally, in Portugal, meetings took place between N-S Centre and the Representation of the EC. We intend to cooperate namely in the implementation of concrete actions of our communication programme concerning European Year for the Intercultural Dialogue.

Thank you very much for you attention and have a good meeting. My colleague Mrs Pavan-Woolfe can't participate neither me because I have a very important debate in the Lisbon Treaty in the Fac of Law today. This meeting is one, the first one meeting, part of our national debate programme organised in partnership with Portuguese government, European Parliament office and Representation of the European Commission about Lisbon Treaty. Portugal, will ratify the Treaty on the national parliament on 23<sup>rd</sup> of may (before be signed by the president of the republic). We intend to discuss the Treaty all around the country and to inform citizens until the entering in force of the Treaty.

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2008-2010**

<b>Representatives of the member States:</b>	1	Cyprus
	2	Finland
	3	Germany
	4	The Netherlands
	5	Malta
	6	San Marino
	7	Spain*
	8	Switzerland*
<b>Parliamentarians:</b>		
<b>Parliamentary Assembly</b>	9	Mr Kimmo Sasi*
	10	Mr Wolfgang Wodarg
	11	Mr Ryszard Czarnecki
<b>European Parliament</b>	12	Mr Alain Hutchinson
<b>Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe:</b>	13	Mr Jean-Claude Frecon
	14	Mr Yavuz Mildon*
	15	Mr Carlos Pinto
	16	Mrs Ludmila Sfirloaga
<b>NGO Representatives:</b>		
<b>Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe</b>	17	Ms Annelise Oeschger*
<b>North-South Grouping of INGOs of the Council of Europe</b>	18	Mr Michel Julien
<b>European Youth Forum</b>	19	Mr Christoffer Grønstad
<b>Global Education Network Europe (GENE)</b>	20	Mr Helmuth Hartmeyer <sup>1</sup>
<b>European NGO confederation for relief and development (CONCORD)</b>	21	
<b>To be confirmed</b>	22	
<b>Secretary General of the Council of Europe or his/her representative:</b>	23	Mrs Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni
<b>Representative of the European Commission:</b>	24	Mrs Luisella Pavan-Woolfe*
<b>Representatives from the South:</b>		
<b>Member of Parliament, South Africa</b>	25	Mr Ben Turok
<b>Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union</b>	26	Mr Habib Ben Yahia
<b>To be confirmed</b>	27	

\* Bureau member

<sup>1</sup> Subject to confirmation by the GENE Network of the formal nomination of Mr Hartmeyer as its representative.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

### 1. REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER STATES

#### **CYPRUS**

Ambassador Nearchos PALAS, Ambassador of Cyprus (Lisbon)

#### **FINLAND**

Ms Anne-Christine KRANK, Deputy Permanent Representative

31 quai Mullenheim, F-67000 STRASBOURG

tel +33 3 88 15 44 44 fax +33 3 88 15 44 40 e-mail [Ann-Christine.Krank@formin.fi](mailto:Ann-Christine.Krank@formin.fi)

#### **GERMANY**

Mr Klaus KRÄMER, Head of Division "Development Education and Information, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Adenauerallee 139-141, 53113 Bonn/Germany

tel +49-228-535-3770 fax +49-228-99-10-535-3770 e-mail [klaus.kraemer@bmz.bund.de](mailto:klaus.kraemer@bmz.bund.de)

Ms Monika ALLRAMSEDER, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development Development Education and Information, Dahlmannstrasse 4, D-53113 Bonn

tel +49 (0)228 99 535-3766 fax +49 (0)228 9910535-3766

e-mail [Monika.Allramseder@bmz.bund.de](mailto:Monika.Allramseder@bmz.bund.de)

#### **HOLY SEE**

Monsignor Luigi Roberto CONA, Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature to Portugal

18 avenida Luis Bivar, 1069-147 LISBON, Portugal

tel +351 21 317 11 30 fax +351 21 317 11 49 e-mail [nunciaturapt@netcabo.pt](mailto:nunciaturapt@netcabo.pt)

#### **MONTENEGRO**

Ambassador Zoran JANKOVIC, Permanent Representative

18 allée Spach, F-67000 STRASBOURG

tel +33 3 88 36 85 65 fax +33 3 88 35 07 24 e-mail [rp\\_montenegro@yahoo.fr](mailto:rp_montenegro@yahoo.fr)

#### **THE NETHERLANDS**

Mr Marcel VAN DER KOLK, Deputy Permanent Representative

3 place Sébastien Brant, F-67000 STRASBOURG

tel +33 3 88 24 75 45/4 fax +33 3 36 70 10 e-mail [marcel-vander.kolk@minbuza.nl](mailto:marcel-vander.kolk@minbuza.nl)

#### **PORTUGAL**

Mr João PATRICIO, Deputy Permanent Representative

11 rue Fischart, F-67000 STRASBOURG

tel +33 3 88 60 16 77 fax +33 3 88 60 70 42

#### **SLOVENIA**

Ambassador Peter Andrej BEKES, Ambassador of Slovenia (Lisbon)

Avenida da Liberdade 49, 6° Esq 1250-139 Lisbon, Portugal

**SPAIN**

Mr Antonio NAVARRO DE ZUVILLAGA, Deputy Permanent Representative,  
67 allée de la Robertsau, F-67000 STRASBOURG  
tel +33 3 88 24 60 50 fax +33 3 88 36 01 83 e-mail [antonio.navarro@mae.es](mailto:antonio.navarro@mae.es)

**SWITZERLAND**

Ambassador Rudolf SCHALLER, Ambassador of Switzerland (Lisbon)  
17 Travessa do Jardim, 1350-185 LISBON, Portugal  
tel +351 213 944 099 fax +351 213 955 945 e-mail [marie-helene.krafft-ferreira@eda.admin.ch](mailto:marie-helene.krafft-ferreira@eda.admin.ch)

Mr Claude FREY, **Chairman of the Executive Council of Europe**  
Route des Clos 108, CH-2012 AUVERNIER  
tel +41 32 732 96 90 fax +41 32 732 96 97 e-mail [claude.frey@bluewin.ch](mailto:claude.frey@bluewin.ch)

**2. PARLIAMENTARIANS****Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Mr Kimmo SASI, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
Parliament of Finland, FIN-00102 Helsinki, Finland  
e-mail [kimmo.sasi@parliament.fi](mailto:kimmo.sasi@parliament.fi)

**European Parliament**

Mr Ryszard CZARNECKI, Member of the European Parliament  
European Parliament, Bât. Altiero Spinelli  
60, rue Wiertz B-1047 Brussels  
Tel.: + 32 (0) 2 28 45441 Fax: + 32 (0) 2 28 49441 e-mail  
[ryszard.czarnecki@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:ryszard.czarnecki@europarl.europa.eu)

**3. REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES**

Mr Jean-Philippe BOZOULS, Secretary of the Chamber of Local Authorities, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

**4. REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS****I. Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe**

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](mailto:mmjulien@yahoo.fr)

**II. European Youth Forum**

Mr Christoffer GRONSTAD  
President of The Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU)  
Bureau member of European Youth Forum  
tel +47 23 31 06 00 Fax +47 23 31 06 01 e-mail [christoffer.gronstad@lnu.no](mailto:christoffer.gronstad@lnu.no)

#### **4. REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

Mrs Margarida MARQUES, Head of the Representation of the European Commission in Portugal  
Largo Jean Monnet 1, Lisbon  
tel +351 21 350 98 21 e-mail [margarida.marques@ec.europa.eu](mailto:margarida.marques@ec.europa.eu)

#### **5. SPECIAL GUEST**

##### **MOROCCO**

Ambassador Samir ARROUR, Ambassador of Morocco in Lisbon

#### **6. COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT**

##### **North-South Centre Secretariat**

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

Mrs Monica MENDES, Finance Officer

Miss Otilia HERNANDEZ GARCIA, trainee

Miss Virginia LOPEZ, trainee

Miss Gwendoline RICHEZ, trainee

Mr Christophe VENET, trainee