

North-South Centre

I. In brief

Created on 16 November 1989, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity of the Council of Europe - more commonly known as the "North-South Centre" – was set up in Lisbon with the purpose to spread the universal values upheld by the Council of Europe – human rights democracy and the rule of law – beyond the European Continent.

To strengthen the promotion of dialogue between North and South, foster solidarity and raise awareness of global interdependence, the North-South Centre was established as an '[Enlarged Partial Agreement](#)' allowing non-Council of Europe member states to join.

The mission of the North-South Centre is to empower civil society, in particular youth and women, through intercultural dialogue and global citizenship education, to play an active role in Council of Europe member states and neighbouring regions.

To this aim, and in particular through its multilateral activities, the North-South Centre responds mainly to three priority areas: 1) [Global Education](#), 2) [Youth Cooperation](#); 3) [Empowerment of Women](#); having all of them Migration and Gender Mainstream as cross cutting dimensions.

II. Mission and Principles

The North-South Centre fulfils a dual political role of representing "the voice of the South" within the Council of Europe and of promoting and transmitting the values of democracy and human rights that are central to the Council of Europe's mission in neighbouring regions.

Building on the experience, knowledge and network of contacts established over the years, the North-South Centre is an important instrument for multilateral cooperation of the [Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy](#).

The North-South Centre's multilateral activities contribute to processes of democratic consolidation in

member states and in neighbouring regions, mainly through education to democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue. The focus of these activities is to strengthen civil society, in particular with regard to youth and women.

The different projects of the North-South Centre contribute to the Council of Europe's neighbourhood Cooperation Priorities, particularly in the "Human Rights" pillar on gender equality and combatting violence against women, and in the "Democracy" pillar in relation to the "Strengthening of participatory democracy and of civil society stakeholders".

In these projects, the North-South Centre relies on the voluntary contributions of the Governments of Malta, Portugal and of the Aga Kahn Development Network.

The North-South Centre also works in close cooperation with the European Union [in the framework of a Partnership Agreement concluded between the Council of Europe and the European Commission](#) to include Global Development Education in formal education in the Balkans, Baltic, South East Europe and Mediterranean and Visegrad regions.

This programme, called iLegend, is part of the [Civil Society and Local Authorities Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe](#).

All North-South Centre programmes are in line with the Council of Europe values, standards and priorities and contribute to the achievement of the [United Nations 2030 Global Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), in particular with regards to the following goals: Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all; Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

III. Priority Areas

The work of the North-South Centre develops around three priority areas:

Global Education

This programme brings together different stakeholders to strengthen global development education through intercultural learning, dialogue and networking in Council of Europe member states and neighbouring regions.

Youth Cooperation

This programme provides training and capacity building for young people and youth organisations and facilitates their participation in decision and policy making.

Empowerment of Women

This programme aims at empowering and protecting women at all levels of society, through the promotion and dissemination of Council of Europe tools, in particular in the southern and eastern Mediterranean regions.

All these three priority areas have migration and Gender Mainstream as a cross-cutting dimension. The North-South Centre works with different actors from origin, transit and destination countries, in particular their diasporas, in order to contribute to a collective response and successful integration of migrants and refugees

The North-South Centre also organises two flagship events:

The **Lisbon Forum** is an annual event, established in 1994 by the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe. The Forum has been a distinctive platform bringing together high-level participants from Europe, neighbouring regions and other continents to share experience, good practice and expertise.

Themes of the Forum have been closely related to the core mission of the Council of Europe: to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law. recent editions of the Forum have sought to address key challenges faced by countries of the Southern Mediterranean and explore possibilities for renewed cooperation with Europe.

These recent editions have been supported by the joint EU/ CoE Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the Southern Neighbourhood” (South Programme).

The **North-South Prize** is awarded each year since 1995 to two candidates who have stood out for their exceptional commitment to promoting North-South solidarity.

The candidates, preferably a man and a woman, must have distinguished themselves in the following areas: protection of human rights, defence of pluralist democracy, public awareness raising on issues of global interdependence and solidarity. Despite the variety of nationalities and fields of action of those that have received the Prize since its creation, they all have in common a strong commitment to the promotion of North-South partnership.

IV. Methodology

Under the principles of dialogue, partnership and solidarity, through a bottom-up approach, the North-South Centre brings together representatives from governments, national parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society.

This “quadrilogue” methodology helps build bridges between relevant actors with different cultures, from diverse backgrounds and multiple approaches.

These principles are put into practice through a bottom-up work approach which entails three specific courses of action undertaken by the North-South Centre:

- **Advocacy:** the push for the implementation of recommendations
- **Capacity-building:** the transfer of knowledge through educators and peers
- **Awareness raising:** contributing to the reflection and understanding of each individual’s role within a globally interconnected society

V. Member States

Since its inception, the North-South Centre has developed a solid network and close partnerships, through its bottom-up approach, with representatives of the "Quadrilogue" in Europe and beyond. It counts with 21 member states: Algeria, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Holy See, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Spain, and Tunisia.

Management of the North-South Centre is overseen by an Executive Committee that is composed of members representing each of the components of the "quadrilogue."

VI. Contacts

For enquiries please contact nscinfo@coe.int