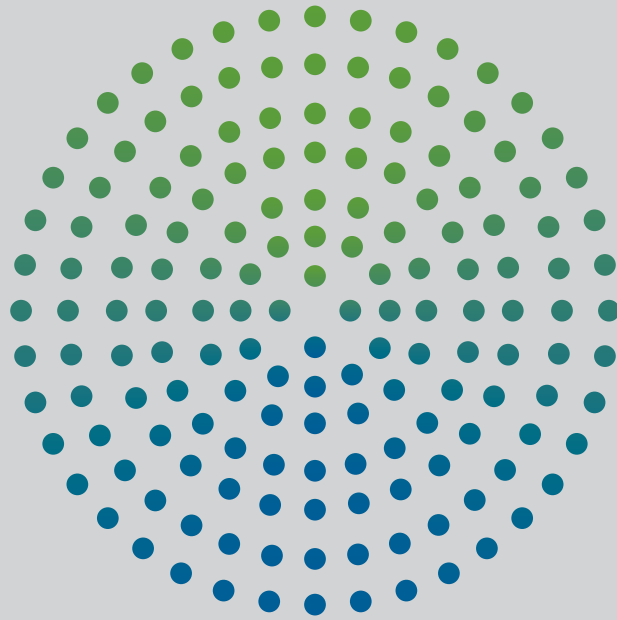
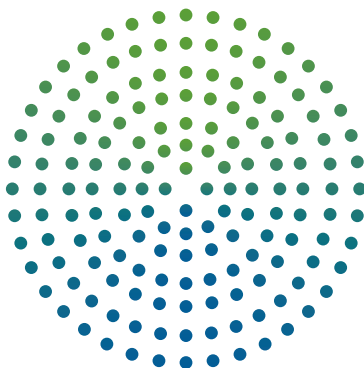


Award Ceremony of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe 2009



norte sul
PRÉMIO





norte sul
PRÉMIO

Award ceremony of the north-south
Prize of the council of europe
2009

Cerimónia de entrega do prémio norte-sul
do conselho da europa
2009



CONTENTS

4 **The North-South Prize**

5 **Introduction**

Denis Huber

Executive Director of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

7 [Original English version](#)

Jaime Gama

Speaker of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic

11 [English version](#)

13 [Original Portuguese version](#)

Deborah Bergamini

President of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

15 [Original English version](#)

Vera Jardim

President of the Portuguese Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

18 [English version](#)

20 [Original Portuguese version](#)

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

22 [Original English version](#)

Lluís María de Puig

Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
(former President of the Parliamentary Assembly)

- 25 English version
- 30 Original French version

Rola Dashti

Winner of the North-South Prize 2009 (South)

- 35 Original English version

Alexander Alekseev

Representative of Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev

- 39 Original English version

Mikhail Gorbachev

Winner of the North-South Prize 2009 (North)

- 40 English version

Aníbal Cavaco Silva

President of the Republic of Portugal

- 44 English version
- 49 Original Portuguese version

54 List of the Prize Winners

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/NS_Prize_en.asp



The North-South Prize



Based in Lisbon, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and solidarity (“North-South Centre”) of the Council of Europe opened its doors in 1990 with the objective of providing a cooperation framework within Europe to raise public awareness of global interdependence issues and to promote policies of solidarity in conformity with the aims and principles of the Council of Europe. Through its different programmes (Global Education, Youth and Intercultural Dialogue), the North-South Centre works to increase understanding and cooperation between people from the North and South. Although it is composed of member States, one of the distinguish features of the North-South Centre is that it does not work merely at an inter-governmental level. It operates, rather, as a “quadrilogue”, a framework for co-operation between governments, parliaments, non-governmental organisations and local and regional authorities.

Win order to divulge the work of those who have stood out internationally for their dedication to the promotion of global interdependence and solidarity, and for their engagement in supporting human rights, democracy and the rule of law, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe has awarded, since 1995, the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe to two candidates.





Description of the Prize

The North-South Prize, awarded to Ms Rola Dashti and Mr Mikhail Gorbachev on 18 May 2010, is the work of Lívio de Morais, an artist of Mozambican origin who has been living in Portugal for more than 30 years. Lívio Morais has been working with the North-South Centre for several years and has also been involved in humanitarian projects with UNESCO.

The sculpture is an allegory of our universal mother, Earth, embracing her children, the North and South. They are interdependent and require each other to flourish. The statue and what it represents reminds us of human life and our common ancestor, Lucy. It reminds us of the divine “Mother Earth”, presiding over the natural processes of fertility and fecundity, whose cult goes back to the Hindus – also known as Isis for the Egyptians, Gaia for the Greeks, Tellus

for the Romans, Nerthus for the Germanic people, Frigg for the Nordic people or Umaï for Mongol. The two beings, intertwined, may symbolise Romulus and Remus, Adam and Eve, or even the first couple of African mythology, beings created when the sun was at its height and who, having decided to free themselves from divine authority, sought refuge on Earth, for better or for worse. The statue can be interpreted in many ways and is identifiable to cultures around the world. Ultimately, it symbolises the great interdependence of humanity and stands as a testament to the work of those who strive for a more unified world for us all.

The statue has a smooth surface and is made out of bronze, an ancient and timeless material, extracted from the Earth. The artist used the African technique of "cire perdue" and the technique of bronzes of Benin. The entwined bodies wish to express the idea of human solidarity and generosity. The noble colour black was chosen as a symbol of re-cognition of the value and dignity of the prizewinners. The statue is set on a base made of African wood, simple and warm - The "Tola". The base is circular to evoke the circular shape of planet Earth, the privileged place for human life. The meridians and lines traced on the base do not represent borders, but space and time and the history of mankind itself.



Introduction

Denis Huber

Executive Director of the North-South Centre
of the Council of Europe



In setting up the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (more commonly known as the “North-South Centre”), in November 1989, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe – and more specifically the Centre’s ten founder States – took a visionary decision. At a time when the Berlin wall was falling down and all eyes in Strasbourg were turned to the East, retaining a global dimension and a Southern perspective was inevitably a medium and a long-term concern. In May 1990, the North-South Centre was set up in Lisbon. From the start, it has built on what, until today, still constitutes its fundamentally pioneering dimension and major development potential:

- » **Its objectives**, both broad and ambitious: to provide a framework for European co-operation designed to heighten public awareness of global interdependence issues, and to promote policies of solidarity complying with the Council of Europe’s aims and principles: respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- » **An open house**: from the outset, the Centre was open not only to the Council of Europe’s member States and the other Parties to the European

Cultural Convention but also to any other interested State and the European Community;

- » **Its decision-making process:** unlike other partial agreements (and the Council of Europe itself), the decisions including those on the programme and budget are not taken by the member States alone. The Executive Council, the NSC's decision-making body, reflects a balance between the four components of the Centre's action (governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and civil society). This "quadrilogue" composition gives the NSC not only its originality but also real credibility in a field of action where non-governmental players are heavily involved;

- » **Its functioning and working methods:** the practical implementation, unique in the Council of Europe, of the "quadrilogue" concept also has a direct impact on the NSC's functioning and working methods, which are more open, more transparent and more inclusive than those of a classic inter-governmental organisation. At the same time, the fact that the Centre is an offshoot of the Council of Europe is a major asset, giving it access to the intellectual and operational resources of the "parent institution", as well as the partnerships forged between the Council of Europe and the other European or international organisations relevant to the Centre's work.

Almost 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, Europe – and the world – have gone through profound changes. Indeed, a new paradigm – often called the "post-9/11" era – has gradually imposed itself, leading to:

– Increasingly acute awareness that the fundamental strategic challenges for world stability now lie in the South rather than in the East; growing evidence

that many of the issues to which modern societies are confronted are not only of global nature but also put at stake the future of humanity as a whole.

– ever growing complexity of the international relations sphere, where many actors have emerged in addition to / competition with the traditional “players” (the states and the international organisations), and where basic notions such as multilateral action, the rule of (international) law and universally shared values are more necessary but also more contested than ever.

– renewed priority attached to an already old concept with revised contours: intercultural dialogue (as a response to the diagnosis of a “clash of civilizations” formulated back in 1993, by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington).

In this new area, the North-South Centre’s capacity of acting in different dimensions and mobilising all relevant actors, together with its expertise in the fields of global education, youth co-operation and intercultural dialogue, are strong added values. Having concentrated its action, in recent years, on two priority geographical areas (Africa and the Mediterranean), and promoted synergies with major actors such as United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), the Anna Lindh Foundation and the “Alliance of Civilizations”, it also has a greater chance “making a difference”. Recent initiatives within the Council of Europe (in particular the “White Paper on intercultural dialogue” which was been published in 2008), or the European Union (such as the joint EU-Africa strategy which emerged from the recent Lisbon Summit, or the Union for the Mediterranean) offer major opportunities in this respect.

Against this background, the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe is progressively turning from a “public relation” event into a political event of major importance. Awarded annually since 1995 to two public figures preferably a man and a woman), it highlights the importance of the “human factor”. The winners of the North-South Prize are recognised for their deep commitment, outstanding achievements and/or the hope they have generated in the field of individual rights protection, the defense of pluralist democracy and North-South solidarity and partnership. But they are also living examples that, in all circumstances and throughout history, individual men and women have been able to and are still capable of stimulating overall progress for humanity. This has been of course the case of all previous North-South Prize winners, among which appear leading figures such as Peter Gabriel, Mary Robinson, Graça Machel, Mário Soares, Xanana Gusmão, Bob Geldof, Kofi Annan, Simone Veil, Jorge Sampaio and Queen Rania of Jordan.

Mikhail Gorbachev and Rola Dashti, the two winners of the 2009 North-South Prize, have brought increased attention to the Prize. They are living symbols of the values of tolerance, co-operation, dialogue and mutual respect (between cultures and civilisations), which are today more important than ever. They also represent, in a most convincing manner, the fundamental principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights, which include the principle of equality between men and women, wherever they live. Indeed, they are among the people who make our world, one world and ultimately, I would add, a better world.



Jaime Gama

Speaker of the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic

President of the Republic,
Members of Parliament,
Former Presidents of the Republic,
Distinguished guests,
Mrs Rola Dashti and Ambassador Alexander Alekseev,
representative of Mr Mikhail Gorbachev,
Former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council
of Europe Lluís María de Puig,
Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe,
Mrs Maud de Boer-Buquicchio,
President of the Portuguese Delegation to the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Vera Jardim,
President of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre
of the Council of Europe, Mrs Deborah Bergamini,



It is a great pleasure for the Portuguese Parliament to be, every year, the chosen venue of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe, awarded to two distinguished personalities elected by the jury of the North-South Centre.

The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe was created in 1990 in Lisbon and since then the North-South Prizes have been awarded every year. This is the 15th prize ceremony. The upcoming speakers will speak more about the prize

winners. On behalf of the Portuguese Parliament and as a host of this ceremony, I would like to express our pleasure a pleasure to host this ceremony in Lisbon, in our national Parliament. The Council of Europe and the North-South Centre, who I also great most warmly, are exclusively responsible for this event with regards to the choice of the Prize winners. So a warm welcome to all of you and congratulations to the laureates.

I will give the floor now to Mrs Deborah Bergamini, Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre



Jaime Gama

Presidente da Assembleia da República

Sr. Presidente da República,
Sr.as e Srs. Deputados,
Sr. Ex-Presidente da República,
Distintos Convidados, Sra. Rola Dashti,
Sr. Embaixador Alexander Alekseev,
representante do Sr. Mikhail Gorbachev,
Ex-Presidente da Assembleia Parlamentar do Conselho da Europa
Sr. Lluís María de Puig,
Sra. Secretária-geral Adjunta do Conselho da Europa,
Maud de Boer-Buquicchio,
Sr. Presidente da Delegação Portuguesa à Assembleia Parlamentar
do Conselho da Europa e Vice-Presidente da Assembleia
da República, José Vera Jardim,
Sra. Presidente do Conselho Executivo do Centro Norte-Sul
do Conselho da Europa, Deborah Bergamini,



É para a Assembleia da República um grato prazer ser o local onde anualmente é feita a imposição do Prémio Norte-Sul do Conselho da Europa a duas distintas personalidades que o júri do Centro Norte-Sul elege para tão importante galardão.

O Centro Norte-Sul do Conselho da Europa foi criado e instalado em Lisboa em 1990 e desde essa data têm sido atribuídos os Prémios Norte-Sul do Conselho

da Europa. Este é o XV Prémio. Sobre os laureados, terão oportunidade de falar os oradores seguintes, pelo que queria apenas dizer, em nome do Parlamento português e como anfitrião, que temos o grato prazer de acolher em Lisboa esta Cerimónia, na sede do Parlamento nacional, na realização de um evento cuja responsabilidade primacial e única, enquanto escolha de galardoados e organização do Prémio, cabe por inteiro ao Conselho da Europa e em especial ao seu Centro Norte-Sul, que aqui são acolhidos igualmente com grato prazer por parte do Parlamento português.

Bem-vindos e as minhas felicitações antecipadas aos laureados.

Em seguida, dou a palavra à Presidente do Conselho Executivo do Centro Norte-Sul do Conselho da Europa, Sra. Deborah Bergamini



Deborah Bergamini

President of Executive Council of the North-South Centre
of the Council of Europe

Mr President of the Portuguese Republic,
Mr President of the Portuguese Parliament,
Honorable Members of the Portuguese Parliament,
Mrs. Deputy Secretary General,
Distinguished Prize winners, dear colleagues
former Presidents of the North-South Centre,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,



First of all, in the name of the North-South Center of the Council of Europe, I wish to express our gratitude to the Portuguese authorities for their continuous support to this event, to the President of the Portuguese Republic, Mr Cavaco Silva and to the President of the Portuguese Parliament, Mr Jaime Gama, for their invaluable participation and constant encouragement to the work of the North-South Centre over these last 20 years.

Since 1995, the Council of Europe recognises through its North-South Prize the work of women and man who are living examples of the values we promote. Women and men that strive for fair societies and a peaceful world.

A significant number of them are present today, and I would like to congratulate them whole-heartedly.



Today, we wish to recognise the devotion of Ms. Rola Dashti and Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev to overcome inequalities and misunderstanding between peoples and cultures.

As a woman engaged in politics, I would like to underline in particular Ms Rola Dashti's role in promoting women empowerment and the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes in Kuwait. Her role as (Founder of the Women Participation Organisation) has been crucial: she has been a leading figure of the women's suffrage movement in the State of Kuwait, lobbying for the May 2005 decree allowing Kuwaiti women to vote and run for parliamentary elections for the first time in the country's history. In 2009, she won the parliamentary election, ranking seventh in her political district, becoming one of the first four women to ever win a seat in the Parliament of Kuwait. It is for her courage and persistence in the struggle for women's rights that she receives today the 2009 North-South Prize.

Our second prize winner, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, marked the 20th Century with his historical contribution to a unified Europe, open international dialogue, transparency and freedom. Facing a difficult economic and political context, he changed the Soviet Union's domestic and international politics, improving political and economic relations with Europe and the United States, progressively reducing tensions resulting from the Cold War. Today, he continues to speak out in favor of perpetuating the democratic process in Russia, for a Europe without dividing lines and a more just international economic system. For both his historical role and his continuous engagement in supporting human rights, intercultural dialogue and understanding between the peoples of the world, he receives today the 2009 North-South Prize.

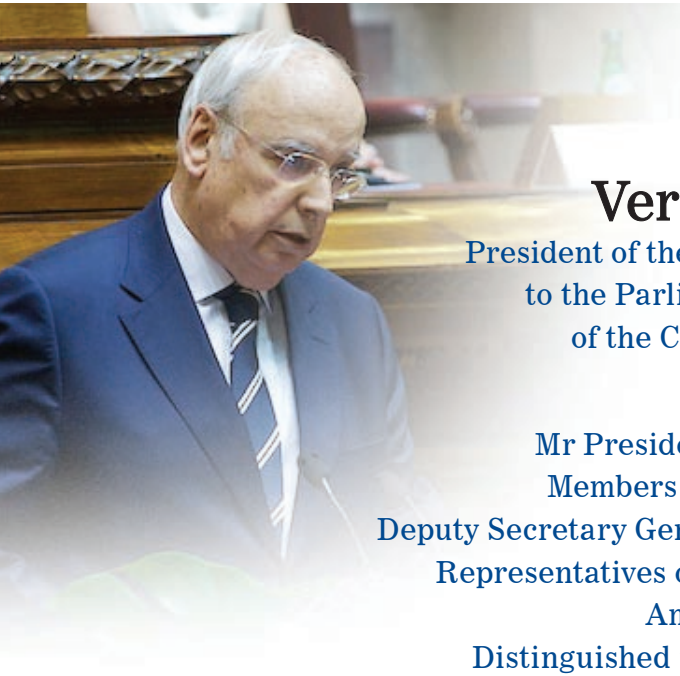
As you know, the North-South Centre is currently celebrating its 20th Anniversary. At this official ceremony, I wish to emphasise the great work accomplished over these last 20 years: giving a European dimension to multilateral co-operation initiatives for sustainable development and serving as a framework for their implementation, improving education and information on global interdependence and solidarity, strengthening ties between NGOs in the North and South and developing working relations with all international organisations concerned with global interdependence.

This morning, a Round Table brought together former prize winners, great political personalities like the President of Iceland, Mr Grímsson and former Chairs of the Executive Council. I am very grateful to their participation and would like to thank them for their contribution to an intense reflexion on the theme “The 21st Century, a century of global interdependence and solidarity”, which will involve innovative plans of action for a new century full of challenges.

Finally, along these living examples of solidarity, equality and development, we should also praise and thank historical figures who paved the way for a better world and an enhanced humanity. To this aim, we have organised the exhibition “20 Bridge Builders in the History of Humanity” which retraces the life of 20 personalities that have distinguished themselves, in the world and through time, for their action in favor of intercultural dialogue.

**Thank you very much and my sincere congratulations once again
to Rola Dashti and Mikhaïl Gorbachev.**





Vera Jardim

President of the Portuguese Delegation
to the Parliamentary Assembly
of the Council of Europe

Mr President of the Republic,
Members of the Parliament,
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Representatives of the North-South Centre,
Ambassadors,
Distinguished prizewinners, including
Mr Gorbachev's representative.



This year, we are celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the North-South Centre, which since its creation in Lisbon, has always been able to count on the committed support of the Portuguese Government and the Portuguese Parliament.

A place for intercultural dialogue, its creation was conceived in the mid 80s as a special meeting place between peoples and cultures. It was a precursor of many other institutions which appeared in many forms, especially in recent years. Its objective has been to promote intercultural dialogue and solidarity between peoples in an era marked by globalisation.

The Centre has been, and still is, especially since the Warsaw Summit which brought together members of the Council of Europe, the fundamental

instrument for the presence of democracy, the rule of law and intercultural dialogue between the peoples of the North and the South. It is in this light that the North-South Prize, awarded to personalities who have distinguished themselves for their commitment to defending these values and for their real contribution to humanity and mutual solidarity, should be understood. The mark of the Centre is present in the fact that there is always a personality being honoured from the North and one from the South. The commitment of these individuals, their political lives, their humanitarian work and struggle for human rights, makes them “bridge builders” for a more just future which is in essence the ultimate objective of the North-South Centre.

This year’s prizewinners, Ms Dashti and Mr Gorbachev, have given in different ways an essential contribution for the achievement of fundamental rights which guide the work of the Council of Europe. In different circumstances, both have fought with courage for their beliefs and have contributed to a more just way of life.

In awarding the North-South Prize, the Council of Europe and the Portuguese Parliament honour a man and a woman who have shown that equality, democracy and human rights are fundamental, becoming yet another example to follow in a world that so needs solidarity, human rights, support and mutual understanding.

Thank you.





Vera Jardim

Presidente da Delegação Portuguesa
da Assembleia da República
no Conselho da Europa

Sr. Presidente da República,
Membros da Assembleia,
Secretária-geral Adjunta do Conselho da Europa
Representantes do Centro Norte-Sul,
Embaixadores,

Distintos laureados, incluindo o representante do Sr. Gorbachev,



Celebramos este ano o 20º Aniversário do Centro Norte-Sul que, desde a sua criação em Lisboa, tem sempre podido contar com o apoio manifesto do Governo Português e da Assembleia da República.

Sendo um lugar de diálogo intercultural, a sua criação foi concebida em meados dos anos 80 como um espaço especial para o encontro de povos e culturas. Foi precursor de muitas outras instituições que surgiram sob diversas formas, em particular nos últimos anos. O seu objectivo tem sido o de promover o diálogo intercultural e a solidariedade entre os povos numa era marcada pela globalização.

O Centro tem sido e é, especialmente desde a Cimeira de Varsóvia que reuniu os membros do Conselho da Europa, um instrumento fundamental

para a presença da Democracia, do Estado de Direito e do diálogo intercultural entre os povos do Norte e do Sul. É sob esta luz que deve ser compreendida a entrega do prémio Norte-Sul a personalidades que se distinguiram pelo seu empenho em defender esses valores e pela sua contribuição para uma humanidade autêntica e mutuamente solidária. A marca do Centro está presente no facto de ser sempre homenageada uma personalidade do Norte e outra do Sul. O empenho desses indivíduos, as suas vidas políticas, o seu trabalho humanitário e luta pelos direitos humanos, faz deles “constructores de pontes” para um futuro mais justo, que é na sua essência o objectivo último do Centro Norte-Sul.

Os laureados este ano, Senhora Dashti e o Sr. Gorbachev, deram de diversas formas uma contribuição essencial para a consolidação dos direitos fundamentais que guiam as acções do Conselho da Europa. Em diferentes circunstâncias, ambos lutaram com coragem pelos princípios em que acreditaram e contribuíram para um modo de vida mais justo.

Ao atribuir o Prémio Norte-Sul, o Conselho da Europa e a Assembleia da República homenageiam um homem e uma mulher que demonstraram que a igualdade, a democracia e os direitos humanos são fundamentais, tornando-se mais um exemplo a seguir num mundo que tanto precisa de solidariedade, direitos humanos, apoio e compreensão mútua.

Obrigado.





Maud de Boer-Buquicchio

Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Dear Mr President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,



This is a very special year for the North-South Centre as it celebrates its twentieth anniversary and the fifteenth anniversary year of its North-South Prize. Many previous prize winners have joined us today or have sent messages of support and I greet them most warmly.

I should like to thank the Portuguese Parliament for its support to this event and for welcoming us this evening. The Portuguese authorities are the host and faithful sponsor of our North-South Centre and we are most grateful for their continued support.

Looking at the list of previous laureates of the North-South Prize, I am struck by their diversity. They are personalities from different regions and backgrounds, some well-known and others working on grass roots projects.

What they have in common is a deep-rooted commitment to the universal values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and a desire to make change happen, whether it be at global, national or local level.

The two prize winners for 2009 exemplify this diversity and are similar in their belief in the possibility for change, sometimes seemingly against all odds.

Rola Dashti is a leading activist in Kuwait, well-known throughout the Middle East region for her advocacy of democratic reform and gender equality. She has been involved in several volunteering activities since her undergraduate years, in particular in assisting refugee families in Lebanon while working with the International Red Cross, and in promoting the economic empowerment of women in the Republic of Yemen. In 2009, she was elected to the Parliament of Kuwait, one of the first four women ever to win a seat.

In 2005 she was awarded the King Hussein Humanitarian Award and we honor today her dedication to the fight for women's rights in her country and in the Middle East. Gender equality has long been a focus of my own work in the Council of Europe and the work of Rola Dashti reminds me again that we must never be complacent in pushing for true equality between women and men in all fields and at all levels. For even where equality exists in legal terms, there is a long road ahead before all the conditions for genuine equality of opportunity in every sphere of life are fulfilled.

Our second laureate, Mikhail Gorbachev, has been at the heart of change on the European continent. As the last Head of State of the USSR, he dared to call for reform and in so doing contributed significantly to the end of the Cold War. He has remained active in Russian political life as well as on the world stage, as a proponent of world peace and social and human rights. In 1992, he established the Gorbachev Foundation and in 1993 the International Green Cross. His vision holds of course a special resonance to us in the Council of Europe. At the 60th anniversary celebrations of our Organization last year he reminded us of the special responsibility of Europe to promoting and maintaining stability in the world, a responsibility which the Council of Europe translates as contributing to "deep security" on our continent and beyond.

The two recipients of the Prize remind us that deep change for the better in our world – even radical change – is possible and within our reach. Let us follow their example as we move forward in our dialogue between countries and regions, continents and peoples.

I congratulate both of them most warmly.



A portrait of Lluís Maria de Puig, a man with glasses wearing a dark suit and a red patterned tie, speaking at a podium with a microphone. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a formal setting.

Lluís Maria de Puig

Representative of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Council of Europe
(Former President of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Council of Europe)

Mr President of the Republic
Mr President of the Parliament,
Mr President of Iceland,
Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre,
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Dear Prizewinners, ladies and gentleman,



I am very happy to find myself among you, as representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, for this award ceremony of the North-South Prize which coincides with the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the “European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity”.

The idea of establishing a permanent structure to promote dialogue between North and South in the spirit of respect for democracy and human rights took shape after an initiative from the Parliamentary Assembly. Five years were necessary to achieve this idea, visionary at the time. The North-South Centre, as we have become accustomed to calling it, was established in November 1989 and inaugurated on 1 May 1990 in this magnificent city of Lisbon. I wish to express the profound gratitude of the Parliamentary Assembly to

the Portuguese authorities for the unfailing support they brought to this Council of Europe structure.

Since then, the Centre works to bring closer together Europe and its neighbouring countries, to strengthen mutual understanding, to consolidate partnerships, even friendships, and to deepen the co-operation in the promotion of the fundamental values that unite us all.

The dramatic events of 11 September and those that followed, including the bloody attacks on 11 March 2004 in Madrid, unfortunately reminded us what forgetting these values can provoke and the monstrous fruits that grow out of misunderstanding and hatred between peoples, cultures and civilisations.

Furthermore, nowadays, the upheaval of the global financial and economic crisis confirms the degree of interdependence of our systems and the need to shoulder, without hesitation, our duty to mutual solidarity.

This is why we need a strong European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, with the means necessary to work effectively in the new global context.

Perhaps, imagining a Centre where all the members States of the Council of Europe and the neighbouring countries of Africa, the Near East and Central Asia could work together to build a more just and even more visionary world. We dare hope that our member States may once again share our vision of the future.

In fact, where would we be without visionaries? Since 1995, the North-South Prize has allowed us to honour the people who had the courage to dream of

a different and better future for their people and who have fought resolutely so that their dreams may come true.

This year, the prize was awarded to Ms Rola Dashti from Kuwait and Mr Mikhail Gorbachev from Russia, two personalities that we could easily qualify as “visionaries” or “bridge builders” according to the exhibition we inaugurated this morning.

Ms Dashti, you have put your energy and competences to the service of people in need and have contributed greatly to the modernisation of the society of your country, Kuwait.

You have worked so that civil society institutions could emerge and become driving forces of development.

You have fought against the discrimination of women so that they may enjoy their rightful place in society. You have won your battle for their voting rights, thanks to you, since 2005, women can participate in parliamentary elections in your country and can be elected, as you have been elected during the last elections in 2009.

Your work is felt way beyond the borders of Kuwait. What you have achieved inspires the hope of millions of women in the Middle East and North Africa.

Thank you, on their behalf as well, for your fight for equal opportunity, the rights of women and democratic reforms; thank you equally for your humanitarian commitment alongside the disfavoured. This prize that you are awarded today is indeed well deserved.

I regret that this year's other prizewinner, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, was not able to be with us today in Lisbon. After having become leader of the former Soviet Union in 1985, he demonstrated enormous courage by thinking and implementing Perestroika, by betting on such a radical change of the economic, social and political system of his country, by opening the way for the end of the Cold War and the path towards long-lasting peace with the West.

In 1989, the first free elections occurred in the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall marked a historic turning point for Europe and the world. Even following his departure from office at the end of 1991, the commitment of Mr Gorbachev for democratic reforms and the promotion of human rights in Russia did not falter.

Thank you to Mr Gorbachev, as his work made it possible to redraw the map of European democracies and to give a new impetus to reconciliation between peoples. Thank you to Mr Gorbachev for having dreamt of a new Europe without barriers and a common home for his people. He greatly deserves this North-South Prize.

I do not forget that last year, Mr Gorbachev celebrated in Strasbourg (and I was by his side) the 60th Anniversary of the creation of the Council of Europe: he took advantage of that opportunity to reaffirm his ambitions and his hopes for the future of our continent and of the whole world.

Dear friends, the Prize that we are awarding today is a testimony of our most sincere gratitude for the contribution given by our prizewinners to the construction of a more just society and a future of peace and equal dignity

for all. We need women and men, who like them, fight to build a world with greater solidarity.

We must continue to raise the awareness of public opinion to the issues of global interdependence and to the promotion of policies of solidarity in line with our fundamental values. We must demonstrate our undying attachment to peace and equal dignity of peoples and cultures and remind the world constantly of the universality, the indivisibility, and the interdependence of human rights, as well as good practices in terms of democracy, good governance and rule of law.

Our destinies, in the North and in the South, to the East and to the West, are linked; we can only succeed together.

I thank you.





Lluís Maria de Puig
Ancien Président de l'Assemblée Parlementaire
du Conseil de l'Europe

M. le Président de la République,
M. le Président du Parlement,
M. le Président de l'Islande,
Mme. la Présidente du Conseil exécutif,
Mme. la Secrétaire Générale Adjointe du Conseil de l'Europe,
Chers lauréats du Prix,
Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs,



Je suis heureux de me retrouver parmi vous, comme représentant de l'Assemblée Parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, à cette cérémonie de remise du Prix Nord-Sud qui coïncide, cette année, avec la célébration du 20^e anniversaire du « Centre européen pour l'interdépendance et la solidarité mondiales ».

L'idée d'établir une structure permanente pour promouvoir le dialogue entre le Nord et le Sud, dans un esprit de respect de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme, a pris corps suite à une initiative de l'Assemblée parlementaire. Pour réaliser cette idée, à l'époque visionnaire, cinq années furent nécessaires.

Le Centre Nord-Sud – comme nous avons pris l'habitude de le nommer – fut établi en Novembre 1989 et inauguré le 1^{er} mai 1990, dans cette magnifique

ville de Lisbonne. Je souhaite exprimer aux autorités portugaises la profonde gratitude de l'Assemblée parlementaire pour le soutien inlassable qu'elles ont apporté à cette structure du Conseil de l'Europe.

Depuis, le Centre œuvre pour rapprocher l'Europe et les pays ses voisins, renforcer la compréhension mutuelle, consolider les relations de partenariat, voire d'amitié, et approfondir la coopération dans la promotion des valeurs fondamentales qui nous unissent.

Les dramatiques événements du 11 septembre 2001 et ceux qui ont suivi, y compris le sanglant attentat du 11 mars 2004 à Madrid, se sont malheureusement chargés de nous rappeler ce que l'oubli de ces valeurs peut provoquer et quels fruits monstrueux naissent de l'incompréhension et de la haine entre les peuples, les cultures et les civilisations.

Par ailleurs, de nos jours, les secousses de la crise financière et économique mondiale confirment, à la fois, le degré d'interdépendance de nos systèmes et la nécessité d'assumer, sans hésitations, notre devoir de solidarité réciproque.

C'est pourquoi nous avons besoin d'un Centre européen pour l'interdépendance et la solidarité mondiales fort, avec les moyens nécessaires pour œuvrer efficacement dans le nouveau contexte global.

Peut-être, imaginer un Centre où tous les Etats membres du Conseil de l'Europe et les pays voisins d'Afrique, du Proche-Orient et d'Asie centrale puissent travailler ensemble pour bâtir un monde plus juste est encore un peu « visionnaire ». Mais, nous osons espérer que nos Etats membres puissent à nouveau partager notre « vision » de l'avenir.

D'ailleurs, que serions-nous sans « visionnaires » ? Depuis 1995, le Prix Nord-Sud nous permet d'honorer des personnalités qui ont eu le courage de songer à un destin différent et meilleur pour leurs peuples, et qui se sont battus résolument pour que leur rêve puisse devenir réalité.

Cette année le prix a été décerné à Madame Rola Dashti, du Kuwait, et à Monsieur Mikhail Gorbatchev, de la Russie, deux personnalités qu'on pourrait parfaitement qualifier de « visionnaires », ou de « bâtisseurs des ponts » selon l'intitulé de l'exposition que nous avons inauguré ce matin.

Madame Dashti, vous avez mis vos énergies et compétences au service des personnes dans le besoin et avez grandement contribué à la modernisation de la société de votre pays, le Kuwait.

Vous avez œuvré pour que les institutions de la société civile puissent émerger et devenir force trainante de son développement.

Vous avez lutté contre la discrimination des femmes, afin que celles-ci aient toute leur place dans la société. Vous avez gagné votre bataille pour leurs droits électoraux : grâce à vous, depuis 2005, les femmes peuvent participer aux élections parlementaires dans votre pays et peuvent être élues, comme vous l'avez été vous-même lors des dernières élections en 2009.

Votre action rayonne bien au-delà du Kuwait. Ce que vous avez réussi suscite l'espoir de millions de femmes au Moyen-Orient et en Afrique du Nord.

Merci, en leur nom aussi, de votre combat pour l'égalité des chances, les droits des femmes et les réformes démocratiques ; merci également de votre

engagement humanitaire à côté des faibles. Ce prix qui vous est remis aujourd'hui est bien mérité.

Je regrette que l'autre lauréat de cette année, Monsieur Mikhail Gorbatchev, ne puisse pas être avec nous aujourd'hui à Lisbonne. Après être devenu leader de l'Union Soviétique en 1985, il a eu l'énorme courage de penser et mettre en œuvre la *Perestroïka*, de parier sur un changement radical du système politique, économique et social de son pays, d'ouvrir la voie vers la fin de la guerre froide et le chemin d'une paix durable avec l'Occident.

En 1989, les premières élections libres en Union Soviétique et la chute du mur de Berlin marquaient un tournant historique pour l'Europe et pour le monde. Même après son départ à la fin de l'année 1991, l'engagement de Monsieur Gorbatchev pour les réformes démocratiques et la promotion des droits de l'homme en Russie n'a pas fléchi.

Merci donc à Monsieur Gorbatchev, car son action a permis de redessiner la carte des démocraties européennes et a donné un nouvel élan à la réconciliation entre les peuples. Merci à lui d'avoir rêvé une nouvelle Europe sans barrières et une « maison commune » pour ses peuples, comme il l'a baptisée. Il mérite bien ce Prix Nord-Sud.

Je n'oublie pas que, l'année dernière, Monsieur Gorbatchev a commémoré à Strasbourg (et j'étais à son côté) le 60^{ème} anniversaire de la création du Conseil de l'Europe ; il a bien profité de l'occasion pour réaffirmer ses ambitions et ses espoirs pour l'avenir de notre continent et du monde entier.

Chers amis, le Prix que nous remettons aujourd’hui témoigne de notre plus sincère gratitude pour l’apport de nos insignes lauréats à la construction d’une société plus juste et à un futur de paix et égale dignité pour tous. Nous avons besoin de femmes et d’hommes qui, comme eux, se battent pour bâtir un monde plus solidaire.

Nous devons continuer à sensibiliser l’opinion publique aux questions d’interdépendance mondiale et à promouvoir des politiques de solidarité conformes à nos valeurs fondamentales.

Nous devons montrer notre attachement inébranlable à la paix et à l’égale dignité des peuples et des cultures, et rappeler constamment au monde l’universalité, l’indivisibilité et l’interdépendance des droits de l’homme, ainsi que les bonnes pratiques en matière de démocratie, de bonne gouvernance et de l’État de droit.

Nos destins, au Nord et au Sud, à l’Est et à l’Ouest, sont liés : nous ne pouvons réussir qu’ensemble.

Je vous remercie.





Rola Dashti

Winner of the North-South Prize 2009 (South)

President, Cavaco Silva,
President of the Assembly of the Republic,
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe,
Chair of the Executive Council
of the North-South of the Council of Europe
Ladies and Gentlemen,



Before I start my speech, I would like to thank you all for your support in liberating my country, Kuwait, almost 20 years ago and enabling me to stand in front of you tonight.

**Mr President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with much emotion and gratitude that I am standing here to receive the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe, which bears elevated connotations for the safeguard of human rights, women empowerment, and the defence of democracy.

The substance of human rights has evolved tremendously with time; nowadays it extends to goals that were a far fetch twenty years ago. During my early years as a women rights activist, our quest for gender equality in a male-dominated society was frowned upon as a utopian claim. In these early years, women in Kuwait were unable to exercise most of their human rights or master their own

destiny, much less having a say in shaping the direction of their country. The same situation was faced by women in most parts of the Arab world.

Myself, along with many other male and female colleagues, went through years of unwavering activism aimed at empowering women in Kuwait and other parts of the Arab region from the discriminatory barriers created by collective misconceptions of women's role in society, and the deliberate misinterpretation of religious tenets resulting in male guardianship.

A major focus of our interest was also for a more genuine democratic process which would grant women the right to exercise their political rights by voting and being elected as members of parliament. Our task was arduous, but mostly thorny; in the early year of our action it was somehow unthinkable, proscribed or simply bordering on illegality.

In those days, we were terrorised psychologically as being traitors, agents of the west, anti-religion, and destroyers of family values. However, despite all the character assassination that was practiced on us, we were determined to change the status quo, to be the voice of the silent majority who aspire for better future, to defend the right of young girls who have no voice, to bring hope to mothers who are concerned about the fate of their daughters, and to change the social discriminatory mind-set against women.

Nowadays, it pleases me to mention that Kuwait has made major advances in women's rights. Strange, and absurd laws, such as that which required women to obtain their father's or husband's permission to get a passport and travel have been recently overturned. We, women of Kuwait have won the right to vote in 2005; furthermore, the country's first four female parliamentarians were elected in 2009, making women represent 8% of the parliament members.

Large strides were achieved in narrowing gender discrimination regarding the government's welfare programme. Our experience has started to be taken as an example by neighbouring Gulf countries.

As a Member of Parliament, and a Kuwaiti eager to bring her country to the highest levels in terms of human rights, we have succeeded, myself and other Kuwaiti parliamentarians, in promulgating a new labour law that safeguards the rights of both nationals and expatriates in the private sector.

Yet, the road to achieving our purposes remains long, and the battle continues. We do still have to confront issues which to most, if not to all of you, would sound like non-issues, such as the ongoing argument about whether women are allowed or should be prohibited from playing sports. Furthermore, to date, women have no presence in the judiciary body in Kuwait. The last communication I received before getting on my way to you was from a young Kuwaiti female lawyer, shroud, first of her class, aspiring to the position of an attorney general on an equal footing with her graduate peers, telling me "I am a good citizen and possess the required credentials, Why Can I not be an attorney general?..."

Friends... let me tell you...

We will be pushing for women empowerment in that particular area, again engaging in a new struggle for civil equity and true democracy. As I believe that divided rights are no rights and must be recognised and achieved.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are not ordinary times for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries. These are unprecedented times for a start of a true democratic process with no gender discrimination and safeguard of human rights. We need

to capture the wind of hope and positive change that replaces enclosure with modernity, ignorance with knowledge, radicalism with tolerance, and terrorism with dialogue. Our region, as you all know, is bestowed with human wealth, where about 50% of population is under the age of 18. With this human wealth comes additional challenges, where we need to ensure that our youth population is the beneficiary of Wind of Hope and not hijacked by the Wind of Terrorism.

These challenges demand the efforts from all of us, citizens of the MENA region, governments, parliaments, private sector and civil societies, to rise to the occasion. It also requires real collaboration, interaction and support of international organisations like the Council. We need to re-strategise our plans, build in our commonalities to understand our differences to advance our societies, and not let our differences dictate our policies and the path of our future. It is with our true understanding and respect to each others identity and culture that we can face the challenges confronting our world and advance human rights of individuals and move towards more pluralistic and democratic societies.

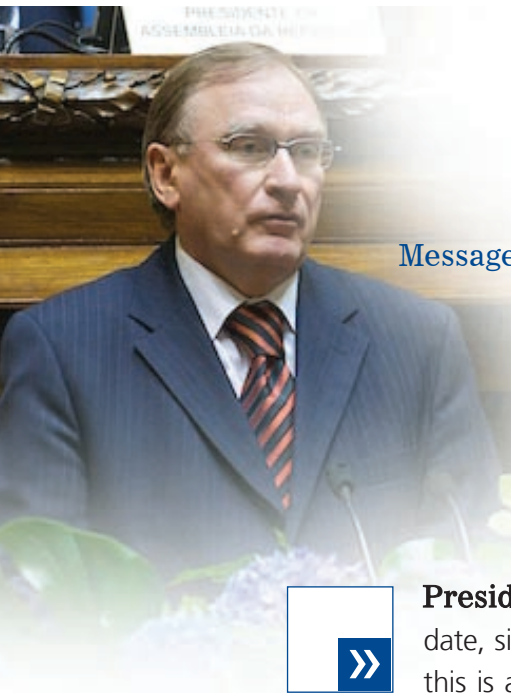
Mr President, Friends,

We need to work closely together, we cannot afford not to confront our challenges, we cannot afford to lose the battle of the Wind of Hope, the stakes are high and we owe it to our citizens and world humanity to live in peace, dignity and prosperity.

In closing, whilst I wish to express my appreciation for the great honour you have bestowed on me today, I would like to note that receiving this award from the Council of Europe is an additional incentive and an added motivation in the pursuit of the strenuous task lying ahead of us.

Thank you all.





Alexander Alekseev

Message from the Russian Ambassador in Strasbourg

Mr President of the Republic,
Mr President of the Assembly,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,



President Mikhail Gorbachev asked me to come to Lisbon on this date, since he is unfortunately not well, to tell you all that for him this is a great honour and a great privilege to get this prestigious award from one of the most influential international organisations. Now we will listen to the presentation of President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Thank you.



Mikhail Gorbachev

Winner of the North-South Prize 2009 (North)



I am grateful for the decision to award me the Prize of the North-South Center, a respected organisation within the framework of the Council of Europe, whose aim is to promote rapprochement and mutual understanding among nations and I regret that I am unable to attend this award ceremony.

Today, we can say that co-operation on the basis of the common European values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law has become a reality in our continent. The Council of Europe is playing a key role in shaping this co-operation.

The end of the Cold War gave Europe and the world a new chance, opening opportunities for solving the global problems of security, poverty and environmental crisis. Regrettably, those opportunities were in large part squandered because of the erroneous assessment of the outcome of the Cold War and the attitudes of triumphalism on the part of the elites in the West, particularly in the United States.

Concern for the future of Europe and of the world requires that we learn lessons from the mistakes made during the past decades. Among other things, it is essential that we critically assess the experience of European construction.

Pope John Paul II was right when he said that Europe must breathe with two lungs – that the European process should have two pillars. We should return to the idea of a common European house, which is bigger than just the construction of the European Union. The EU will have to devote the coming years to “digesting” its new members and the new problems that came to light during the global financial and economic crisis. In the meantime, there remains the goal of building a Greater Europe that should include Russia and other countries, which in the foreseeable future will not become EU members. If we lose sight of that goal, Europe could again become a divided continent.

In this context, I must mention the idea proposed by President Dmitry Medvedev, who has called for a new pan-European security treaty. I believe that such a treaty should draw on all the positive accomplishments of the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe signed in November 1990; it should also take into account the bitter lessons of the past two decades, when, to our common shame, Europe witnessed new wars.

Following the end of the Cold War, we started a search for a new European security architecture. The ideas suggested at the time included the creation of a European Security Council or “security directorate.” It was taken for granted that they would include not only the European nations but the United States as well. For European security is unthinkable without the United States and Russia, nor can it be built “against” them. However, the new generation of leaders was unable to realise those ideas.

We now have a chance for a new beginning in building a European security architecture. After initial scepticism, the initiative of the President of Russia is

getting closer attention. I welcome this tendency and hope that discussions will soon take on a more concrete character.

The united Europe will be able to prove its right to leadership in addressing the main challenges of our time: demilitarising international politics, narrowing the gap between wealth and poverty and saving our planet from environmental disaster. Its ability to do so will be revealed to the fullest once Russia's integration in all European processes is complete.

To try to characterise succinctly Russia today and our country's position in the world, I would say this:

Russia is looking for its own way toward stable democracy, and it is probably about halfway down the road to that goal. Russia is also looking for its own role in a globalising world, and it is ready to play a worthy role in shaping the global world. A consensus is now emerging in Russia about the need to move forward with a project to modernise the country. This is the task, as set forth by President Medvedev, which has put the issue of modernisation at the centre of public debate. What needs to be done to relinquish the inefficient political and economic models and structures and to reach a new stage in our development? Those are the questions that are on our minds today. That, rather than fictitious imperial ambitions or spheres of influence, is the primary concern of Russia's citizens.

I believe that the key is the political aspect of modernisation. To succeed, a modernisation project must be based on an ongoing dialogue between the government and the people, which requires substantial changes in the election laws and the party system, as well as stronger and more independent legislative and judicial branches and the media.

Russia is fully capable of advancing to a new level of democracy. Modernization will make Russia stronger, but no one, and least of all Russia's neighbours, should fear a stronger Russia.

To conclude, I would like to wish the North-South Center success in its noble mission of promoting mutual knowledge and mutual enrichment of cultures and nations, who in this day and age are bound to have a shared destiny.



Aníbal Cavaco Silva

President of the Republic of Portugal

Mr President of Iceland, Your Excellency,
Mr President of the Assembly of the Republic,
Deputy Secretary-General of the Council of Europe
Chair of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre
Prizewinners,
Deputies,
Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,



It is always with renewed satisfaction that I join the solemn award ceremony of the North-South Prize. A prize that is a symbol of the values of peace, democracy and the respect for human rights enshrined in the founding principles of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe.

The role models we have gained with the personalities that have been recognised over the last fifteen years represent the best contributions for the dissemination and promotion of these values.

Today's ceremony has a very particular symbolism as it is taking place in the same year that we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the North-South Centre, an institution created in 1989, following a proposal that I had the

honour of presenting, as Prime Minister, with the Council of Europe, in response to a need that was felt for greater structured dialogue between the North and the South.

The urgency of this objective, which represented, from the beginning, the core of the work of the North-South Centre, is, today, even more evident. This very urgency was recognised recently by His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, during the meeting He had, last week, with cultural agents, on the occasion of His visit to Portugal, when referring to the North-South Centre – the only international organisation he referred to specifically – calling it the “corner stone of intercultural dialogue”.

I would like to take advantage of this occasion to pay my heartfelt tribute to all those who, over the past twenty years, under the North-South Centre, have given and are giving the best of themselves in favour of deepening intercultural dialogue and the elimination of barriers and the strengthening of understanding between North and South, thereby contributing to building a more stable, more peaceful world with greater solidarity.

It is with great honour that Portugal hosts, from the beginning, the headquarters of the North-South Centre, as a sign of our country’s attachment to the ideals of the Council of Europe and the Universalist tradition and openness to dialogue that characterise our relationship with other peoples and cultures.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This year we are honouring two personalities for their unique contribution to the promotion of the ideals of freedom, democracy, and the respect for human dignity – Ms Rola Dashti and Mr Mikhail Gorbachev.

Rola Dashti is a recognised politician and activist in Kuwait, and one of the most influential women of the Arab world. From early on, she maintained a strong involvement in numerous humanitarian causes and volunteer activities, revealing a profound conscience of social justice and a keen sense of solidarity.

Her militancy for democratic reforms and the strengthened role of women in public life made her fight, for many years, for the enlargement of the right to vote to include the women of Kuwait. Exactly a year ago, in May 2009, Rola Dashti was part of the first group of four women to be elected to the Parliament of their country. She currently is President of the “Economic Society of Kuwait”, the first woman elected to that position.

The example of Ms Rola Dashti represents a source of inspiration for all who strive for a more just society, one in which all citizens can enjoy the same rights, freedoms and opportunities.

The second prizewinner, Mikhail Gorbachev, was unable to be present here today. I would like to address him my friendly wishes for a speedy recovery, through Ambassador Alexander Alekseev, who will receive the Prize on his behalf.

The awarding of the North-South Prize to Mikhail Gorbachev, precisely at the time when the North-South Centre celebrates its 20th Anniversary, reminds us of the extraordinary events that occurred at the end of the 80s and that marked the beginning of a new time in history.

The awarding of the North-South Prize to Mikhail Gorbachev is a tribute to a statesman whose courage and determination opened up the way for the end

of the so-called “Cold War” and for the regaining of freedom and democracy by millions of people, in several states, beginning by Russia.

Under the impetus of the reforms initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in the former Soviet Union, Europe and the world underwent profound changes.

The logic of confrontation and antagonism between the East and the West was replaced by the logic of co-operation and compromise.

The arms race led into an unprecedented disarmament process, recently renewed, and which remains a priority in the promotion of a safer, stable, and developed world which we aim to build.

Mikhail Gorbachev has also distinguished himself in the leadership of various organisations that promote international co-operation, from which I would like to highlight the Gorbachev Foundation, dedicated to research of social, economic and political issues, and “Green Cross International”, an institution dedicated to the treatment of pressing ecological issues and the prevention of conflict arising from environmental degradation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The roundtable that preceded this ceremony focused on the challenges facing the future of North-South dialogue, calling on all of us to the task of making the 21st Century, the century of global interdependence and solidarity.

It is an objective that requires us to be able to deepen the dialogue between peoples and cultures, building an international system that places, increasingly,

the respect for human rights, the promotion of peace and the prosperity of all peoples at the centre of our action.

The two prize winners present this year, in this perspective, an inspiring moral force, which the Prize that has been awarded to them, justly, recognises.





Aníbal Cavaco Silva

President of the Republic of Portugal

Senhor Presidente da Islândia, Excelência,
Senhor Presidente da Assembleia da República,
Senhora Secretária-geral Adjunta do Conselho da Europa,
Senhora Presidente do Conselho Executivo do Centro Norte-Sul,
Senhores Laureados,
Senhoras e Senhores Deputados,
Senhores Embaixadores,

Minhas Senhoras e Meus Senhores,



É com uma satisfação sempre renovada que me associo à cerimónia solene de entrega do Prémio Norte-Sul. Prémio que é um símbolo dos valores da paz, da democracia e do respeito pelos Direitos Humanos inscritos na matriz fundadora do Centro Norte-Sul e do Conselho da Europa.

Os exemplos de vida que nos são dados pelas personalidades que vêm sendo agraciadas ao longo dos últimos quinze anos constituem o melhor dos contributos para a divulgação e promoção destes valores.

A presente cerimónia reveste um simbolismo muito particular por ter lugar no ano em que comemoramos o vigésimo aniversário do Centro Norte-Sul, uma instituição criada em 1989, no seguimento de uma proposta que tive a honra

de apresentar, enquanto Primeiro-Ministro, junto do Conselho da Europa, em resposta à necessidade que se fazia sentir de uma abordagem mais estruturada do diálogo entre o Norte e o Sul.

A premência deste objectivo, que constituiu, desde o início, o cerne da actividade do Centro Norte-Sul, é, hoje, ainda mais evidente. Isso mesmo reconhecia, ainda recentemente, Sua Santidade o Papa Bento XVI, no encontro que manteve, na semana passada, com os agentes culturais, por ocasião da sua Visita a Portugal, quando, aludindo ao Centro Norte-Sul – único organismo internacional a que se referiu expressamente – lhe chamou “pedra angular do diálogo intercultural”.

Quero, pois, aproveitar esta ocasião para prestar a minha sentida homenagem a todos quantos, ao longo dos últimos vinte anos, no âmbito do Centro Norte-Sul, deram e vêm dando o melhor de si mesmos em favor do aprofundamento do diálogo intercultural e da eliminação de barreiras à aproximação e ao conhecimento entre o Norte e o Sul, contribuindo, dessa forma, para a construção de um mundo mais estável, mais pacífico e mais solidário.

É com grande honra que Portugal acolhe, desde o início, a sede do Centro Norte-Sul, num sinal do apego do nosso país aos ideais do Conselho da Europa, bem como da tradição universalista e de abertura ao diálogo que caracterizam o nosso relacionamento com outros povos e culturas.

Minhas Senhoras e Meus Senhores,

Este ano homenageamos duas personalidades pelo seu contributo singular para a promoção dos ideais da liberdade, da democracia e do respeito pela dignidade

da pessoa humana – a Senhora D. Rola Dashti e o Senhor Mikhail Gorbatchev. Rola Dashti é uma reconhecida política e activista do Kuwait, e uma das mulheres mais influentes em todo o mundo árabe. Desde muito cedo, manteve um forte envolvimento em inúmeras causas humanitárias e actividades de voluntariado, revelando uma profunda consciência da justiça social e um apurado sentido de solidariedade.

A sua militância a favor das reformas democráticas e do reforço do papel da Mulher na vida pública levou-a a bater-se, durante vários anos, pelo alargamento do direito de voto às mulheres no Kuwait. Há precisamente um ano atrás, em Maio de 2009, Rola Dashti fez parte do grupo das quatro primeiras mulheres a serem eleitas para o Parlamento do seu país. Preside, actualmente, à “Sociedade Económica do Kuwait”, sendo a primeira mulher eleita para aquele cargo.

O exemplo da Senhora D. Rola Dashti constitui uma fonte de inspiração para todos quantos pugnam por sociedades mais justas, em que todos os cidadãos possam desfrutar dos mesmos direitos, liberdades e oportunidades.

O segundo laureado, Mikhail Gorbatchev, não pôde estar aqui presente. Quero endereçar-lhe, através do Embaixador Alexander Alekseev, que receberá o Prémio em seu nome, votos amigos de uma pronta recuperação.

A atribuição do Prémio Norte-Sul a Mikhail Gorbatchev, precisamente na altura em que o Centro Norte-Sul comemora o seu 20º aniversário, traz-nos à memória os extraordinários acontecimentos do final da década de oitenta do século passado e que marcaram o início de um novo tempo histórico.

A atribuição do Prémio Norte-Sul a Mikhail Gorbatchev é uma homenagem que prestamos a um estadista cuja coragem e determinação abriram caminho ao fim da denominada “Guerra Fria” e à reconquista da liberdade e da democracia por parte de milhões de pessoas, em vários Estados, começando pela própria Rússia.

Sob o impulso das reformas iniciadas por Mikhail Gorbatchev na ex-União Soviética, a Europa e o mundo sofreram profundas alterações.

A lógica de confrontação e de antagonismo entre o Leste e o Oeste foi substituída pela lógica da cooperação e do compromisso.

A corrida às armas deu lugar a um processo de desarmamento sem precedentes, ainda recentemente renovado, e que permanece como uma prioridade na promoção do mundo mais seguro, estável e desenvolvido que almejamos construir.

Mikhail Gorbatchev tem-se igualmente distinguido na liderança de diversos organismos que promovem a cooperação internacional, de que destacaria a Fundação Gorbatchev, dedicada à investigação dos problemas sociais, económicos e políticos, e a “Cruz Verde Internacional”, uma instituição vocacionada para o tratamento das prementes questões ecológicas e a prevenção de conflitos resultantes da degradação ambiental.

Minhas Senhoras e Meus Senhores,

A mesa redonda que precedeu esta cerimónia debruçou-se sobre os desafios que se colocam ao futuro do diálogo Norte-Sul, convocando-nos a todos para

a tarefa de fazer do século XXI, o século da interdependência e da solidariedade mundial.

Trata-se de um objectivo que exige que sejamos capazes de aprofundar o diálogo entre povos e culturas, construindo um sistema internacional que coloque, cada vez mais, o respeito pelos Direitos Humanos, a promoção da paz e da prosperidade de todos os povos no centro da nossa acção.

Os dois laureados deste ano constituem, nessa perspectiva, uma força moral inspiradora, que o Prémio que lhes foi atribuído vem, muito justamente, reconhecer.



List of the Prize Winners

Every year since 1995, the North South Prize of the Council of Europe has been awarded to two personalities who have excelled in their commitment to the defense and promotion of Human Rights and pluralistic democracy, the development of intercultural dialogue and the reinforcement of the north-south partnership and solidarity. The list of the Prize winners is the following one:



2009

Rola Dashti (Kuwait)
Mikhail Gorbachev (Russia)



2008

Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan
(Jordan)
Jorge Sampaio (Portugal)



2007

Simone Veil (France),
Kofi Annan (Ghana),



2006

Mukhtaran Bibi (Pakistan)
Father Van der Hoff (The Netherlands)



2005
Bogaletch Gebre (Ethiopia)
Bob Geldof (Ireland)



2004
Nawal El Saadawi (Egypt)
Stéphane Hessel (France)



2003
Frene Ginwala (South Africa)
António de Almeida Santos (Portugal)



2002
Albina du Boisrouvray (Switzerland)
Xavier Bagnoud (East Timor)



2001
Maria de Nazaré Gadelha Ferreira Fernandes (Brazil)
Cornelio Sommaruga (Switzerland)



2000
Marguerite Barankitse (Burundi)
Mário Soares (Portugal)



1999

Emma Bonino (Italy)
Abderrahman Youssoufi (Morocco)



1998

Graça Machel (Mozambique)
Lloyd Axworthy (Canada)



1997

Mary Robinson (Ireland)
Patricio Aylwin (Chile)



1996

Danielle Mitterrand (France)
Algerian women (Algeria)



1995

Peter Gabriel (United Kingdom)
Vera Duarte (Cape Verde)

