



European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity

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Council of Europe

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Introduction

Terry Davis,

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

- » **Human rights,** democracy and rule of law are the values on which the Council of Europe bases its mandate in striving for greater unity through tolerance, mutual respect, consensus and co-operation.

In an ever more interdependent world, we must put an end to cultural and religious barriers and engage in dialogue to strengthen mutual understanding, stamp out prejudice and further universal commitment to these fundamental values.



The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe performs a crucial role in this regard. With its openness to continents other than Europe, particularly Africa and the Mediterranean region, the Centre has been able to acquire expertise in matters of global interdependence and solidarity as well as a networking capability, qualities which are proving to be of high importance for the Council of Europe's mission.



Claude Frey,

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

The North-South Centre has a twofold task: alerting European public opinion to issues of global interdependence, and promoting policies of solidarity that comply with the Council of Europe's aims and principles, namely respect for democracy, social cohesion and human rights.

Today it is more essential than ever to honour these values if we want our planet to be anything but a battleground for economic rivalries and conflicts.

However, we are also convinced that only by upholding these rights everywhere can we equip ourselves to meet the challenges of this dawning century.

We are equally convinced that the contributions of all the forces of society will be needed to take up these challenges.

There is no doubt that the call can be answered thanks to the North-South Centre with its "quadrilogue" management system (governments / parliamentarians / local and regional authorities / civil society organisations).

Origin: the Lisbon Declaration



The North-South Centre, officially named the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, is a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, the oldest political organisation of European states.

It currently has 19 member states:
Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The North-South Centre was the outcome of a process started in 1984, when the Portuguese Parliament hosted a conference held by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on "North-South: Europe's role".

The Lisbon Declaration, adopted at the end of the conference, broached the idea of a European public campaign on North-South interdependence and solidarity.

The campaign was launched in 1988 with the support of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the European Parliament.



It ended with a European conference of parliamentarians and non-governmental organisations (Madrid, 1-3 June 1988), which launched the Madrid Appeal. The Madrid Appeal laid the foundations for a dynamic dialogue between North and South in a spirit of respect for democracy and human dignity in order to allow all the world's inhabitants to enjoy fair, balanced and sustainable development.

The Portuguese government then proposed setting up a European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, a proposal supported by the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in a recommendation adopted in January 1989.

Creation

On the basis of Resolution (89)14, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 16 November 1989, the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity opened in Lisbon in 1990. Its existence was confirmed by Resolution (93)51 of 21 October 1993.

Mandate



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 social cohesion.

According to the North-South Centre's statute, this involves the following activities:

- » giving a European dimension to multilateral co-operation initiatives for sustainable development, then 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;
- » developing working relations with all international organisations concerned with global interdependence;



» acting as an interface between Europe and the South.

That is why the North-South Centre is often described as the Council of Europe's window on the world, because its purpose is to assert the validity of the values upheld by the Council beyond the European continent.

Structure



The North-South Centre is a

unique entity within the Council of Europe. It is run on the basis of a quadrilogue, a term coined to mean the combination of four partners from political institutions and civil society - governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and NGOs.

This system helps build bridges between players with different approaches, viewpoints and priorities, generating constructive synergies.

All the partners in this four-way process take part in running the North-South Centre as members of its decision-making bodies.

The Centre has two statutory bodies – the Committee of Representatives of the member states and the Executive Council (and the Bureau) – whose role is to approve and supervise the programme of activities and the budget of the Centre. The Executive Council and the Committee of Representatives of the member states meet twice a year. The Bureau meets on a quarterly basis.

Working methods



As a Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, the Centre shares the advantages of being institutionally an integral part of Europe's oldest political organisation of states. The Council of Europe is often defined as the "custodian" of Europe's political culture of pluralism, democracy and respect of human rights. The Centre is under the administrative responsibility of the Directorate General for Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. This tutelage reinforces the "intercultural dialogue", "education" and "youth" dimensions in the Centre's activities.

The Centre is a unique "confidence-building" instrument that enables its partners to analyse, discuss and compare their policies and experiences so that they can share best practices, reach consensus and influence political debate.

The North-South Centre's work is based on three principles: dialogue, partnership and solidarity. Governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations constitute the partners in the "quadrilogue" and are involved in the Centre's activities.

The Centre carries out studies and organises debates, workshops and training courses. It acts as a catalyst by facilitating meetings between players from different horizons and countries, working on issues of common interest and encouraging the



formation of networks. Its expertise is used and recognised by its partners.

Resources



The budget of the North-South Centre is made up of the obligatory contributions of its member states and the additional income it receives from voluntary contributions.

At a regional level, the Centre has made geopolitical choices to make its action more effective, and so priority has been given to dialogue with the Mediterranean basin and with Africa. The Centre's activities are to be found in the most important dynamics, such as the consolidation of the African Union, the prospects for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the new European Consensus on Development, the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the European Union's Neighbourhood Policy. In this regard, the Centre contributes to debates on human rights, democracy and good governance as pillars of sustainable development.

Strategic orientations



The North-South Centre places its activities in the current international context, pursuing the main priorities established by the Council of Europe and its regional and international agenda.

One of the priorities has therefore been raising awareness of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and stimulating discussions and reflection among political decision makers, civil society organisations and experts. Global education and youth are the main vehicles of this strategic choice.

The Centre also plays an essential role in intercultural dialogue. This role was reiterated in the Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Council of Europe (May 2005) and in the Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's strategy for reinforcing intercultural dialogue (October 2005). The Centre's action also extends to questions of migration and co-development.



Lines of action and programmes



The following lines of action and programmes have been identified:

Line of action 1: Raising European public awareness of issues of global interdependence and solidarity through education and young people.

Programme 1.1: Strategies and capacity building for global education.

Programme 1.2: Training and capacity building of young people and youth organisations.

Line of action 2: Promoting North-South solidarity policies in conformity with the goals and principles of the Council of Europe through dialogue between Europe, the southern Mediterranean countries and Africa.

Programme 2.1: Intercultural dialogue.

Programme 2.2: Dialogue on human rights, democratic governance and development.

Programme 2.3: Migration and co-development.

The two lines of action and programmes are supported by the Programming and Communication sector as well as by the Management.

Strategies and capacity building for global education



The North-South Centre understands global education to mean development education, including sustainable development, human rights education, education for peace and conflict prevention and intercultural education.

Expected results are:

1. To strengthen the quadripartite partnerships and networks of main stakeholders in the field of global education;
2. To improve the intra- and inter-institutional cooperation in the field of global education and strengthening the youth dimension;
3. To support global education policies and national structures.

Training and capacity building of young people and youth organisations



Young people are recognised as special partners and a target group for the activities of the North-South Centre.

The programme's objective is to provide training and capacity building for young people and youth organisations as well as to facilitate policy action on youth in development policies, reinforcing the role of youth as a fundamental force in the field of North-South interdependence.

Expected results are:

1. To strengthen the global youth partnership for sustainable development;
2. To reinforce its contribution to the Council of Europe and European Union Euro-Med partnership on youth policies, training on human rights education and intercultural dialogue;
3. To build capacity and increase young people's participation in the Euro-African co-operation.

Intercultural dialogue



The North-South Centre has been working on intercultural dialogue since its creation. The Action Plan from the 3rd Summit and the Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's strategy for reinforcing intercultural dialogue (October 2005) have strengthened this dimension and naturally guide the Centre's activities in this direction.

The programme's objective is to contribute to the elaboration of strategies and tools for a better knowledge and a mutual understanding in order to reinforce the regional stability between Europe and its Mediterranean neighbouring countries.

Expected results are:

1. To participate in the reflection and consultation process of the Council of Europe's White paper on intercultural dialogue;
2. To implement confidence-building measures aimed at reinforcing a better knowledge of the Other and a mutual understanding.



Human rights, democratic governance and development



The programme's objective is to facilitate the creation of political platforms of North-South dialogue in order to foster respect for human rights and democratic governance as pillars of sustainable development.

The programme involves the quadrilogue partners in this dialogue with the objective of incorporating their proposals and of reinforcing their participation and ownership of development processes.

Expected results are:

1. To promote the reinforcement of democratic governance processes and political reforms in the Southern Mediterranean countries and Africa;
2. To promote the role of women in the Euro-Med partnership;
3. To facilitate the dialogue between members of quadrilogue from Europe, Southern Mediterranean countries and Africa on human rights, democratic governance and promotion of peace.

Migration and co-development



The programme's objective is to facilitate North-South dialogue on migration and co-development to foster migratory policies including co-development, respect of human rights and the intercultural dimension.

On several occasions, the work of the Centre in the field of migration and co-development has been mentioned by the Parliamentary Assembly and the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Expected results are:

1. To reinforce political dialogue between quadrilogue members and the dialogue between experts from the countries of origin, transit and destination on the management and monitoring of migration processes;
2. To highlight the importance of the social remittances of migrants;
3. To highlight the role of migrants in intercultural dialogue.

Programming and communication sector



The mission of the programming and communication sector is to co-ordinate the preparation of the programme of activities and to monitor its implementation, as well as to make the work of the North-South Centre more visible and effective and to encourage new solidarity policies.

The latter objective is carried out through its website (www.nscentre.org), its publications, its multimedia centre and its contacts with the national and international press.

In addition, every year the Centre awards the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe to two personalities for their deep commitment and outstanding achievements in promoting human rights and human dignity in a North-South context.