



# 25<sup>TH</sup> LISBON FORUM

25-26 November 2019

***Bridging the Paradigm:  
the relation between Development and  
Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy***

***Achieving together the Sustainable Development Goals***

Concept note

Venue:

Ismaili Centre

Ensuring Sustainable Democratic Governance and Human Rights in the Southern Mediterranean

Funded  
by the European Union  
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by the Council of Europe

EUROPEAN UNION

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

## **Summary and purpose**

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While human rights, rule of Law and democracy constitute the aim, purpose and objectives of the Council of Europe, if there is a paradigm that today should reflect the global consensus of humanity is the one of sustainable development. This global consensus was reached in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda as a shared roadmap and a social contract based on common objectives, the strong involvement of all stakeholders, cooperation, solidarity, equity and participatory governance with the purpose of ensuring the universality of the above-mentioned values and that in this process no one is left behind.

The reflection on this relation and its implications, both conceptually and operationally, for the achievement of the SDGs globally, in Europe and beyond, constitutes the purpose of the 25th Lisbon Forum's subject: "*Bridging the paradigm: the relation between development and human rights, democracy and the rule of Law. Achieving together the SDGs*", which aims at being a Forum of joint reflection and dialogue among international organisations and *quadrilogue* partners to promote:

- the reflection within the Council of Europe on what it can do to further promote and contribute to their global achievement,
- the reflection on whether and how, besides the global and the national layers of the SDGs' governance, a regional layer could contribute to achieve them better,
- the reflection on how to bridge the paradigm between development and human rights, democracy and the rule of Law from different cultures and civilisations and what role can be played by intercultural dialogue and cooperation on that purpose,
- a reflection on how to achieve together the SDGs in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

This year's Lisbon Forum will also be the occasion to reflect the role played by the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity - the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe - in the framework of its 30th anniversary. It will be pertinent to consider its contribution to the SDGs, from its past and present valuable experience and activities, to the potential main lines of action in the future.

## **Background**

For 30 years, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe has been an interface for the Council of Europe's vocation for solidarity, dialogue and partnership beyond Europe, positively contributing to its external dimension and action in the framework of the Neighbourhood Policy and beyond. On its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and the framework of Council of Europe's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary reflection on its vision and priorities towards the future, the Centre has carried out a reflection process to define its orientations towards the future to develop its full potential, whose outcome has been the elaboration and approval of a Vision Paper by its Executive Committee. As stated in it, a conceptual approach to the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North South Centre – is implied in its name itself as well as its membership, and from them can be done:

- *Global*, as a Centre for the external and global projection of the Council of Europe, with a vocation to realise its objectives beyond its geographical area, and to contribute to answering globalisation and its challenges.
- *Interdependence and Solidarity*, assuming development as a goal, and the challenge and opportunity of relating human rights, the rule of Law and democracy with it, as well as the achievement of the SDGs as a guiding line of action.
- *Of the Council of Europe, and therefore for human rights, the rule of Law and democracy.*

- For *Intercultural and Intercivilisational Dialogue*, with the purpose to contribute to each society's evolution through its own history, cultural tradition and cosmo vision to the conviction on the universality of human rights, rule of Law and democracy.
- *With a vocation to contribute to its Neighbourhood Policy.*
- *An Enlarged Partial Agreement, with the value and potential of non-Council of Europe member States participation.*
- *A quadrilogue Centre*, since an essential and defining characteristic of the Centre is the presence in its institutional life and activities, together with the representatives of governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and civil society and NGOs, conforming a unique framework and an opportunity to act together.
- *A European Centre and an opportunity to foster the external dimension of European construction together with the European Union.*

For 70 years, one of the utmost concerns of the Council of Europe has been to face major obstacles to development, constituted, inter alia, by the denial of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It considers that all human rights and fundamental freedoms are indivisible and interdependent and that, in order to promote development, urgent consideration should be given to the monitoring, promotion and protection of these rights.

This 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the Lisbon Forum intends both to contribute to the reflection of the Centre's projection towards the future in its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, as well as generally to that of the Council of Europe in its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, taking into account the decisions and considerations on the Council of Europe and its future taken by the ministerial meeting of the Committee of Ministers held on the 16 and 17 May 2019 in Helsinki, as well as those of the other organs of the Council of Europe. It intends to contribute to it and to "to the realisation of the Organisation's aim to achieve a greater unity among us with a view to safeguarding and realising our ideals and principles which are our common heritage, to facilitating our economic and social progress and to pursuing peace based upon justice and international co-operation", as stated by the Ministers representing the member States of the Council of Europe, after reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the rule of Law and of the enjoyment by all persons within their jurisdiction of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

To do so, there could hardly be a more appropriate subject and challenge than the one of bridging the paradigm between development and human rights, the rule of Law and democracy to achieve together the SDGs. Since today, the major expression of global interdependence and solidarity to ensure that "no one is left behind" is the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The Agenda has brought about an important paradigm shift: from considering the development of a transitive verb, to considering it an intransitive one. Thus we are all in development, and we all face the common challenge to achieve it and avoid going backwards in the way towards development. This approach also signals that development has multiple economic, social and environmental dimensions beyond income and, for the first time, the 2030 Agenda provides for universally accepted objectives and measures set so that all countries can communicate within equitable parameters. The shift also involves a clear call for the involvement of all stakeholders towards a multilevel dialogue and reinforced joint action among all spheres of governance, where the role of civil society is particularly relevant to ensure that those who are often left behind have a voice too.

An essential element of this shift of paradigm and renewed global consensus on development is the consideration of human rights, the rule of Law and democracy as defining elements of development. As pointed out by the Council of Europe's Secretary General in his letter of May 2015 to the UN Secretary General "they are not values on their own right, but important factors of sustainability for any societal model". As well, a human rights based approach to

development is inextricably linked to the right to development: every human is entitled to contribute, participate and exert economic, social, environmental, cultural and political rights contributing to a fair and sustainable development.

As an annual high level event since 1994, the Lisbon Forum of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe has been a distinctive platform bringing together different personalities from Europe and other continents to share their experience, good practice and expertise on some of the major and critical concerns of our current global interconnected societies, with a vocation of constituting a public and second-track diplomacy platform that may identify questions and proposals which can be later introduced in the public debate or the diplomatic agenda. Benefiting from the *quadrilogue* structure, the North-South Centre's Lisbon Forum is a unique framework to strengthen mutual knowledge, building confidence and setting the ground for effective multilateral and regional cooperation. Recent editions of the Forum have been supported by the joint European Union and Council of Europe South Programme "Ensuring sustainable democratic governance and human rights in the Southern Mediterranean", and thus reinforcing its dimension as a platform for CoE-EU dialogue and cooperation and for European construction.

### ***Format and structure***

In its 25th edition, the Lisbon Forum aims at being a high level Forum for dialogue and reflection

- among international and regional organisations;
- among the four sectors of the *quadrilogue* approach on the Sustainable Development Goals;
- on the mission and role of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North South Centre of the Council of Europe

In relation to the challenges of bridging the paradigm between development and human rights, rule of Law and democracy to achieve together the SDGs.

To fulfil such aim, it will be structured through:

- Two main inauguration plenary panels on the global subject of the Forum – the relation between Development and Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Democracy. Achieving together the Sustainable Development Goals -, and on the regional governance of the SDGs, reflecting on whether and how, besides the global and State layers of the SDGs governance, a regional layer – globally and specifically in Europe – could contribute to achieve them better. While the first panel will gather the highest representatives of the Council of Europe *quadrilogue* – presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of International NGOs with a representative from the Committee of Ministers-; the second will constitute a panel of dialogue among international and regional organisations, which will gather the Council of Europe Secretary General with her counterparts of the UN system and other relevant regional organisations. These two panels will take place during the morning session on November 25th, which will conclude with the ceremony of commemoration of the 30th Anniversary of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North South Centre.

Five sessions:

- Three workshops on the role, respectively, of each of the non-governmental sectors of the quadrilogue, in regard to the subjects and issues of the Forum, to be

organized in coordination with the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of International NGOs of the Council of Europe, which may invite, among others, their relevant counterparts of other international organisations.

- One workshop on the role that the Council of Europe reports and outputs may play in the elaboration and evaluation of National Plans for the achievement of the SDGs.
  - A thematic panel on Development and human rights, rule of Law and democracy: an intercultural approach to the achievement of the SDGs, organized in collaboration with the UN Alliance of Civilisations. It will focus on intercultural and intercivilisation dialogue and cooperation to bridge the paradigm between development and human rights, rule of Law and democracy and to achieve together the SDGs.
- A special session on the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity – North South Centre and the achievement of the SDGs.
  - A closing summing up and looking forward session.

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