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**NORTH SOUTH CENTRE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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**INTERCONNECTING PEOPLE:
MANAGING MIGRATION, AVOIDING POPULISM, BUILDING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES AND
REINFORCING THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE**

Conclusionsⁱ

1. The context

An annual event since it was established in 1994 by the North South Centre (NSC) of the Council of Europe (CoE), the Lisbon Forum (LF) brings together high level participants from Europe, neighbouring regions and international organisations to discuss topics closely related to the core Council of Europe's priorities. Recent editions of the Lisbon Forum have also sought to address new challenges in the framework of a North-South dialogue.

In addressing the theme "Interconnecting People: Managing migration, avoiding populism, building inclusive societies and reinforcing the North-South dialogue", the Lisbon Forum 2017 referred to the key priorities of the Council of Europe as presented in the Secretary General's latest report on the State of Democracy, Human Rights and the Rule of Law. The Forum also referred to the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 agenda as guidelines to implement the NSC's work. Finally and most importantly, the Lisbon Forum 2017 placed "people" at the centre of the discussion by acknowledging their sovereignty, by trusting in their potential and by stressing their interdependence and interconnection.

1. Managing Migration:

By underlining good practices in Portugal, Greece and Morocco, together with the insights on EU policy, the Lisbon Forum concluded that:

- Sharing prosperity and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will largely contribute to address the root causes of migration. Managing migration means addressing the origin of the problem and not only its consequences;
- Managing migration must have a supranational, regional and national coordinated response based on a win-win partnership. All actors involved should avoid limiting their actions to short-term measures based on the crisis concept and exceptional situations; they should work together to better manage migration flows and to ensure enforcement of international law;

- Appropriate resources should be available for transit countries to deal with the flow of migration;
- The negative and stereotyped side of migration needs to be challenged and should be balanced with its positive effects. Giving a discourse that “migration is a Trojan horse of terrorism” only creates mistrust between countries. Media should be rendered accountable for contributing to create negative stereotypes;
- Citizens and authorities should stand firmly together in the protection of the rule of law;
- Specific measures such as the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019), should be put forward to protect the most vulnerable, in particular unaccompanied minors, young people and women.

2. Avoiding Populism:

A number of reasons, some of which linked to the negative effects of globalization, like the erosion of organized labour, long-term unemployment, shrinking welfare, austerity policies, as well as the reaction against progressive cultural change and popular resentment towards traditional political classes, are feeding populist movements worldwide. Moreover, in a context of unprecedented migration flows and rising radicalisation and terrorism, populist support is strengthened by anti-immigrant attitudes.

In this context, the Lisbon Forum concluded that:

- Promoting and (re)establishing credibility of democracy is of utmost importance. All stakeholders should reinforce their efforts in promoting a culture for a democratic citizenship. Promoting trust in democratic institutions and the construction of fully inclusive societies can be an antidote against fear and a pre-condition for democratic security;
- Raising awareness about and advocating for human rights – especially among the young generations - is part of the solution. Traditional political parties should reinvent themselves and attract the new generations that have drifted away from politics;
- Understanding populism implies differentiating between “good” and “bad” populism where “good” populism is linked to a new civism: more active, regular, universal and with some form of direct democracy; and “bad” populism is linked to simplistic, racist, xenophobic and discriminatory speech that missuses public fear;
- There is no space to be tolerant with hate speech. Measures should be taken to combat certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

3. Building Inclusive Societies:

Meaningful integration requires smart policies to foster and promote inclusive societies. In managing diversity, all the stakeholders should engage all levels of governance in a two way process that involves both migrants and the host societies.



Towards Strengthened Democratic Governance in the Southern Mediterranean

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- Measures taken to strengthen democratic governance and to promote confidence in democratic institutions, through the participation of citizens at local and national levels, can offer opportunities for engagement. Strengthening democratic governance is an essential component of any effort to prevent and combat radicalization and terrorism and to promote peaceful and inclusive societies;
- Education has a fundamental role to play. Well managed cultural diversity requires democratic citizenship education, respect for cultural rights and intercultural dialogue. Educating young people and pupils in schools is part of the long-term responses;
- Young people and women have an essential role to play in promoting peace and inclusive societies. National and international authorities must engage young people and women as partners for peace, recognising their potential as positive actors and supporting their efforts;
- Financial resources and policies should be more directed to educate people to live together, to give them tools on how to manage cultural diversity, to make sure integration is done with dignity and respecting the same rights;
- The role of Diasporas should not be forgotten in the process of migrant's integration in the country of destination as well as in supporting their families in the country of origin.

4. Reinforcing the North-South Dialogue:

The dialogue between the North and the South is of paramount importance for the Council of Europe and its neighbouring countries, especially when it seems that globalisation has had negative effects both in the South and in the North.

- A meaningful North-South dialogue must be symmetric, demand-driven and should take into account local capacities and the possibility of achieving concrete and sustainable goals;
- A North-South dialogue should not be misunderstood as a West-South dialogue. Central and Eastern European countries have a relevant role to play in the North-South dialogue. Enhancing political dialogue between the North and the South will allow the Council of Europe and our neighbouring partners in advancing bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of common interest;
- We should look at the Mediterranean as a macro region. North-South relations are in the centre of globalization and we need to have a different way of looking at the Mediterranean, not as a wall or a border but as an element of unity. In our geopolitical context we should have in mind the neighbours of our neighbours and extend the dialogue to other countries in Africa, in particular those in the Sahel;

- Stability and peace is the priority but it cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the economic development of the Southern Mediterranean region (use of natural resources, promotion of investment in the South countries, encourage youth and women entrepreneurship). More investment is required to strengthen the region;
- Interreligious dialogue is a relevant element of the North-South dialogue, as religion plays a significant role in the countries of the North and the South. We need to take care of the relations between civilizations and religions which also have a historical significance;
- Expertise, training and peer-to-peer networking are core elements of the North-South Dialogue.

5. Final remarks

In addressing all issues mentioned above, the role of the civil society and the bottom-up approach should be stressed, as well as other components of the Quadrilogue (governments, parliaments and local and regional authorities) and international organizations.

Participants welcomed the Lisbon Forum as a platform to develop a productive dialogue between countries of Europe and neighboring regions with a view to practical co-operation in fields of mutual interest.

Based on these conclusions, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe will join the efforts of all stakeholders and participants present at the Lisbon Forum and continue to enhance the capacities for dialogue among all state and non-state actors of the quadrilogue from origin, transit and destination countries, integrating its expertise in the fields of youth, women and global education.

ⁱ The Secretariat of the North- South Centre of the Council of Europe is the only entity responsible for the drafting of the conclusions of the LF 2017.