



Award Ceremony 2021 North-South Prize of the Council of Europe: focus on safeguarding human rights in times of crisis

Lisbon, 22.09.2022 – The 2021 [North-South Prize of the Council of Europe](#) (Lisbon, *Assembleia da República* of Portugal, **October 18th, 12.00 UTC+1**) will be awarded to the [COVAX Mechanism](#), represented by Prof. **José Manuel Durão Barroso**, Chair of the Board of the Gavi Vaccine Alliance; Ms **Jane Halton**, Chair of the Board of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; Ms **Etleva Kadilli**, Director of Supply Operations at UNICEF; and Dr **Bruce Aylward**, Senior Advisor to the Director General of the World Health Organisation, in recognition of the efforts made to ensure that COVID 19 vaccines are made available and distributed worldwide. The COVAX Mechanism is a major actor of global solidarity in the context of the Covid-19 health crisis, thereby contributing to the protection of public health and the building of a more equitable world.

Ms. [Zarifa Ghafari](#), former Mayor of Maidan Shahr, capital city of the Wardak Province in Afghanistan will be receiving the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe in recognition of her courage and strong commitment to defending women's rights in her home country, as well as internationally. Having been the youngest and first female mayor in Afghanistan and having been subjected to terrorist threats, Ms. Zarifa Ghafari became a leading light in the movement against obscurantism. As a staunch defender of women's rights, she opposes the Taliban's policies, advocating for the right to education for girls. Although she has since fled the country, her courage fighting for democracy and human rights was never defeated.

"On October 18, we will honour the responsiveness and efficiency of the COVAX Mechanism, which has denounced and countered an unfair situation where inequalities have been exacerbated by limited access to health care. Its work acts as an effective example of multilateral cooperation in the face of adversity, and a model for crisis management, ensuring equal access to basic protection for all. Zarifa Ghafari will be awarded on the same day. She embodies the missions of the North South Centre of the Council of Europe encouraging the efforts of young people and women to defend and uphold the values of democracy and human rights. "

Ambassador Afonso Malheiro, Executive Director of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

The Prize will be presented by the President of the Portuguese Republic **Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa**. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Marija Pejčinović Burić**, as well as the Chair of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre, **Ambassador Lorenzo Vella**, will also take part in the ceremony.

The 2021 North-South Prize of the Council of Europe Award ceremony will be webcasted live at www.nscentre.org

Press Contact

For any information concerning the ceremony, accreditation or interviews, please contact:
Rozenn HEMON - 00351926346743 – Rozenn.hemon@coe.int