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Future of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 1893 (2009)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the initiative taken by the Parliamentary Assembly, in the context of the 20th anniversary of the North-South Centre, to launch an in-depth consideration of the Centre's objectives, mandate and priorities, as well as on its functioning and composition. In this respect, it took note with great interest of [Recommendation 1893 \(2009\)](#) on "The future of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)" and of the detailed proposal for a new resolution which appears in its appendix.
2. The Committee of Ministers recalls that, at the Warsaw Summit in 2005, the Council of Europe Heads of State and Government committed themselves to a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions – the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia – on the basis of the aforementioned principles and recognised the role of the North-South Centre in promoting this dialogue, as well as its mission of fostering European awareness of intercultural and development issues. It underlines that recent developments in the Arab region make this political commitment – and the role to be played by the Centre – even more important.
3. The Committee of Ministers also reminds the Parliamentary Assembly that the Council of Europe is at present engaged in a comprehensive reform process, led by the Secretary General and firmly supported by the member states. This process aims, *inter alia*, at strengthening the Council of Europe's external presence and operational capacity. Especially in the light of recent events, a new focus is moreover being given to the Council of Europe's commitment in Europe's neighbouring regions, in co-operation with the European Union.
4. Against this background, the Committee of Ministers took the necessary measures in order to ensure that the process of adopting a new resolution for the North-South Centre would not only follow a large consultation process, involving all the Centre's stakeholders, but also be integrated in the reform process of the Council of Europe as a whole. This is why, at their 1077th meeting (24 February 2010), the Ministers' Deputies invited the Secretary General, the Executive Council of the North-South Centre, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe to provide an opinion on the possible revision of the resolution of the North-South Centre, on the basis of the elements outlined in Parliamentary Assembly [Recommendation 1893 \(2009\)](#). The recommendation was also transmitted to the European Commission and to the European Parliament for information and possible comments.
5. Opinions were subsequently adopted by the Executive Council of the North-South Centre, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, and comments were received from the Presidents of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Committee of Regions. On the basis of [Recommendation 1893 \(2009\)](#), of the opinions and comments received, and in the light of the ongoing reform of the Council of Europe as a

1. adopted at the 1113th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (4-5 May 2011)



whole, the Secretary General presented two successive proposals for a new resolution, which were discussed by the bodies of the North-South Centre. Following these discussions a new draft resolution was agreed upon by the States members of the Centre with the important following elements:

- the Centre will keep its present legal nature, and continue to function as an enlarged partial agreement of the Council of Europe;
- the “quadrilogue” functioning of the Centre is preserved, while making sure that all member states are taking full part in the decision making process;
- the Centre will mainly act as an interface between the Council of Europe and countries in neighbouring regions which are interested in co-operating with our Organisation, by offering them a platform for structured co-operation at different levels (governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, civil society);
- an invitation is made to all member states of the Council of Europe and to the European Union to join the Centre as soon as possible.

6. The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to representatives of the States members of the Partial Agreement establishing the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre),² adopted, on 4 May 2011, Resolution CM/Res(2011)6 as appended to the present reply. It will enter into force on 1 June 2011, thereby allowing the new “Executive Committee” of the North-South Centre to hold its constitutive meeting before the summer break.

2. States concerned: Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Appendix to the reply

Resolution CM/Res(2011)6 on the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 May 2011 at the 1113th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, in its composition restricted to representatives of the States members of the Partial Agreement establishing the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre),³

Having regard to the Statute of the Council of Europe adopted on 5 May 1949;

Recalling Resolution Res(89)14 establishing a European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 November 1989 at its 85th Session;

Recalling Resolution Res(93)51 confirming the continuation of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 21 October 1993 at the 500th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies;

Considering Statutory Resolution Res(93)28 on partial and enlarged agreements, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 1993 at its 92nd Session;

Considering Resolution Res(96)36 establishing the criteria for partial and enlarged agreements of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 October 1996, at the 575th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, as amended by Resolution CM/Res(2010)2, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 May 2010 at the 1084th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies;

Considering [Recommendation 1893 \(2009\)](#) on "The future of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)", adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly on 20 November 2009;

In light of the positive opinions of the Executive Council of the North-South Centre, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and the Conference of International Non-Governmental Organisations of the Council of Europe, as well as the support expressed by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions of the European Union;

Recognising the efforts of the North-South Centre to reflect fully and consistently the Council of Europe's political priorities as established at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw (16-17 May 2005);

Welcoming the growing collaboration between the North-South Centre and regional and international organisations such as the European Union (in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union, signed in May 2007) and the United Nations;

Considering the relevance of the North-South Centre in an ever-growing complex international environment and its unique mission of providing a framework for North-South co-operation to increase public awareness of global interdependence and solidarity issues and strengthen – through intercultural dialogue – the commitment to the principles and values shared by the Council of Europe, the European Union and the United Nations, particularly in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

Welcoming the unwavering support from the Government of Portugal since the setting-up of the North-South Centre in Lisbon in May 1990,

Reaffirms the importance and relevance of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) as an enlarged partial agreement of the Council of Europe, managed autonomously, subject to the provisions contained in the appended revised Statute which enters into force on 1 June 2011.

Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2011)6

Revised Statute of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre)

3. States concerned: Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Article 1 – Aims and functions

1.1 The aims of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (“the Centre”) are:

- to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law through intercultural dialogue and education, in particular among the youth of Europe and its neighbouring regions;
- to provide a framework for European co-operation for the purpose of increasing public awareness of global interdependence and solidarity issues;
- to promote policies of solidarity in conformity with the aims and principles of the Council of Europe, by fostering dialogue and co-operation between Europe and non-European countries in neighbouring regions.

The Centre will pursue its aims in conformity with the values and principles of the Council of Europe.

1.2 The Centre will thus serve to:

- a. improve education and information on human rights, democracy and the rule of law and on the fundamental issues of global interdependence and solidarity, and promote liaison between the competent government departments and services of the member states as regards their public awareness work on the aforementioned issues, both directly and in their support of NGOs;
- b. promote intercultural dialogue between Europe and non-European countries or neighbouring regions;
- c. offer a platform for structured co-operation with the Council of Europe, mainly for non-European neighbouring countries which may be interested in acceding to the Centre;
- d. maintain and further enhance the process of quadripartite communication and co-operation between governments, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organisations (“NGOs”), in particular:
 - by strengthening co-operation and contacts between NGOs from the North and the South, active in promoting a better understanding of global interdependence and in pursuing solidarity on the basis of universal principles and commonly shared values;
 - by encouraging similar contacts at parliamentary and local and regional authorities level;
- e. develop working relations and synergies with the European Union prior to its accession, the United Nations and other regional and international institutions and organisations active in relation to global interdependence and solidarity and sharing the values of the Council of Europe.

Article 2 – Location of the Centre

2. The Centre’s premises are located in Lisbon by courtesy of the Government of Portugal.

Article 3 – Membership of the Centre

3. All member states of the Council of Europe are invited to become members of the Centre. A member state may join at any time by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Other states may be invited to accede to the Centre by a decision of the Committee of Ministers taken by the majority provided for in Article 20.d of the Statute of the Council of Europe and by the unanimous vote of the representatives of the member states of the Centre entitled to sit on the Committee after consulting the other members of the Centre. The European Union is invited to join the Centre.

Article 4 – Executive Committee

4.1. The Executive Committee is the decision-making statutory organ of the Centre.

4.2. The Executive Committee has the following composition:

- a. a government representative designated by each member state of the Centre and a representative designated by the European Union once the European Union becomes a member of the Centre;
- b. four parliamentarians, two of whom designated by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and two of whom designated by the European Parliament;

- c. four members representing local or regional authorities, two of whom designated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and two of whom designated by the Committee of the Regions of the European Union;
- d. four members representing organised civil society, two of whom designated by the relevant structures of the Council of Europe responsible for civil society and youth, and two of whom designated by the Executive Committee following proposals by the Bureau, selected from non-governmental organisations active in priority activity areas of the Centre and ready to engage in a concrete co-operation with the Centre to serve common objectives;
- e. the Secretary General of the Council of Europe or his/her representative, in an advisory capacity;
- f. a representative of the European Commission/Union (as long as the European Union is not a member of the Centre).

4.3a The decisions concerning the adoption of the budget of the Centre shall be taken by the Executive Committee in its composition restricted to the members designated under Article 4.2a, with a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and a majority of the members entitled to vote.

4.3b All other decisions shall be taken by the Executive Committee as a whole, with a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and a majority of the members of the Executive Committee, including the favourable vote of at least half of the members voting, as designated under Article 4.2a above.

4.4 The Executive Committee shall meet twice a year, in principle in Lisbon and in Strasbourg. It may, if the need arises, decide to organise meetings in other venues.

Article 5 – Bureau

5.1. The Executive Committee shall elect, from among its members, a Bureau composed of a Chair and eight other members, ensuring that five of the Bureau members are governmental representatives, on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution, and that parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and civil society are each represented in the Bureau, as well as the European Commission/Union.

5.2. The Bureau shall monitor the preparation and execution of programmes and report to the Executive Committee. It shall also prepare the meetings of the Executive Committee, with the assistance of the Centre's Secretariat.

5.3. The Bureau shall also carry out any other task entrusted to it by the Executive Committee.

Article 6 – Secretariat of the Centre

6.1. The Secretariat of the Centre shall be headed by an Executive Director. The number of staff shall be determined by the Executive Committee in the light of the tasks and the agreed programmes of the Centre. 6.2. The Secretariat shall in particular:

- a. prepare programmes for the implementation of the aims and functions listed under Article 1;
- b. serve as a liaison centre and clearing-house for information on activities concerning global interdependence and solidarity;
- c. constitute basic documentation on global interdependence and solidarity issues, in contact with universities and appropriate centres in Portugal and elsewhere;
- d. maintain working relations with the European Union, the United Nations and other regional and international institutions and organisations, as a follow-up of the decisions taken by the Executive Committee and/or the Bureau;
- e. explore new co-operation prospects or partnerships as may be relevant to the programmes of the Centre, with prior guidance from the Bureau or the Executive Committee;
- f. provide meeting facilities for the organs of the Centre and for activities in pursuance of its aims.

Article 7 – Financial arrangements

7.1. Expenditure relating to the implementation of common secretariat expenditure and an allocation to the programme account shall be covered by the regular budget of the Enlarged Partial Agreement establishing the Centre, within the limits agreed by the Executive Committee.

7.2. Additional expenditure relating to programmes as well as consultants and temporary staff recruited on the basis of specific needs arising from such programmes shall be covered by voluntary contributions made available by members of the Centre, the European Union and/or other donors to fund these programmes.

7.3. The travel and subsistence expenses of persons attending meetings of the Executive Committee shall be paid by the member state or the organisation concerned, unless otherwise decided by the Executive Committee on the basis of special purpose allocations specified in the budget of the Centre.

7.4. Additional expenditure arising from the organisation of statutory meetings elsewhere than at the seat of the Council of Europe or the premises of the Centre shall be borne by the country hosting the meeting.

Article 8 – Amendment/s to the Statute

8. The present Statute may be amended by an unanimous decision of the Committee of Ministers in its composition restricted to the representatives of the member states of the Centre, on the basis of an opinion of the Executive Committee adopted in accordance with Article 4.3b above.