

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Conference

Warsaw, 22 September- 3 October 2013

Working session 13 – Tolerance and non-discrimination

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Promotion of mutual respect and understanding through global education, history teaching and interreligious dialogue (North-South Centre)

- Building on the experience, knowledge and network of contacts established over the 25 years since it was established, the Centre has been **promoting dialogue between North and South, fostering solidarity and raising awareness of interdependence**, and developing multilateral activities geared towards transmitting and promoting the core values of the Council of Europe.
- The Centre strives to promote gender empowerment, youth participation and democratic consolidation through intercultural dialogue in co-operation with civil society, local authorities, governments and parliaments.
- The Centre is an important asset of the Council of Europe and its role has been refocused to contribute to implementation of the **Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy**. The Centre **contributes to democratic consolidation in the countries of the region, as a platform bringing together participants from civil society, local authorities, governments and parliaments to share experience, good practice and expertise on an equal footing with their counterparts from Europe. The work of the Centre is focused primarily on developing civil society, in particular those working with or for youth and women.**
- The Centre works in close co-operation with the European Union in the framework of a Joint Management Agreement concluded between the NSC and the European Commission to raise awareness of global interdependence and solidarity through global/development education and youth co-operation in Europe and beyond.
- The Centre's work in the fields of Global Education and Youth have enabled it to develop educational tools and skills and e-learning courses on intercultural dialogue, democratic citizenship and the human rights dimension of global education. These training courses and tools help develop skills, build capacity and promote participation in policy and decision-making processes.

Since it was established in 1994 by the North-South Centre, the Lisbon Forum has been a distinctive platform bringing together high-level participants from Europe, neighbouring regions and other continents to share experience, good practice and expertise. Themes of the Forum have been closely related to the core mission of the Council of Europe: to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law. In light of the events of the "Arab

Spring”, recent editions of the Forum have sought to address key challenges faced by Arab societies and explore possibilities for renewed co-operation with Europe. Organised in co-operation with the Anna Lindh Foundation, International IDEA and Aga Khan Development Network and with significant support from the Joint EU/CoE South Programme “Strengthening democratic reform in the southern Neighbourhood” LF2014 will address the issue of **Electoral processes and democratic consolidation in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean**, and will include a roundtable on the **Participation of women in electoral processes** Moreover the Forum will prepare and adopt operational conclusions and recommendations, addressed to all governance actors that will seek to improve electoral processes and strengthen democratic governance.

NSC also has a dedicated programme for women:

The Programme for Women aims to strengthen and develop the role of women as actors in the political process in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean region, and to promote the empowerment of women at all levels of governance so they can contribute actively to processes of democratic consolidation in this region.

Dimensions:

- The participation of women in politics;
- Preventing violence against women and promoting the adoption of the CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention);
- Women and the media;
- Preventing human trafficking;
- The Euro-Med Women Network.

Key recent activities include:

- National Workshop on “The political participation of women in Politics: Key factor for dialogue and democratic consolidation” (Tunis, 17 March 2014);
- National workshop on “Enhancing women's access to political life in the Mediterranean: challenges and opportunities. The example of Morocco”(Tetouan, 28 March);
- Launch of the new Euro-Med Women Network website: www.nswomennetwork.org;
- 3rd International Conference of the North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women (NSPEW) “The participation of women in political life in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries: Challenges and Opportunities” (Rabat, 17-18 June 2014);
- Awareness-raising activity organised *en marge* of 3rd International Conference of the North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women (NSPEW) on fighting violence against women as a contribution to the promotion of the Istanbul Convention (Rabat, 18 June 2014).

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