Breakout Session
Friday/ 03 May 2019/ 11:30-13:00/ Baku Convention Centre

Interculturality and universality of human rights, democracy and the rule of Law

Rationale

The ultimate sense for the Intercultural and Inter-Civilisations Dialogue of the Council of Europe is the conviction that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are universal principles and values. However, each individual and society has to reach this conviction through its own history, cultural tradition and cosmovision.

Popper’s distinction between open and closed universals and Simone Weil’s “Need for Roots” framed well this debate. On the one hand, according to Popper, while each society has some closed universals; collective life has to have also open universals which may be within or in different closed universals, as is the case of human rights, democracy and rule of law. To promote them implies to open the society. On the other hand, according to Simone Weil, human rights are also human obligations that are rooted vertically in the origins of our families, and horizontally in the symbolic world of our societies and cultures; therefore we cannot travel towards open universals such human rights, democracy and the rule of law but from the roots of our cultures and civilisations. In order to travel with others to a shared universality; we have to know and understand the roots from which their universality is sought.

Nonetheless, in the midst of a changing globalized world, it is not uncommon that the principle of universality is challenged by fears, assertion of identities, rising fundamentalism and nationalistic movements; and threatened by cultural and religious relativism, extremism and discriminatory or populistic movements that bring about the rejection of the “other”.

In this context and for 30 years, the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe - whose mandate is also enshrined in the conviction of the universality of these principles - has been raising awareness about global interdependence and solidarity on the basis that there is “one world, our world” and that we all have a mutual responsibility towards the common good of humankind; and humankind is universal.

In this sense, since 1995, the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe has been recognising the pragmatism of the actions carried out by different personalities around the world who:

- stood out for their exceptional commitment to promoting and protecting social justice, solidarity and collective identity,
- distinguished themselves in areas such as the protection of human rights, defence of pluralist democracy, and public awareness raising on issues of global interdependence and solidarity,

– despite the variety of their nationalities and fields of action, had in common a strong commitment to the promotion of North-South partnership in the framework of an intercultural and inter-civilisations dialogue.

Through the live testimonies and reflections of former laureates of the North-South Prize of the Council of Europe, the North-South Centre proposes to engage the audience of the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in a discussion around the interculturality and universality of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, by inviting them to share with the participants of the WFID how they – through their personal and professional trajectory reached (or not) the conviction of the universality of these principles, and what are, in their perspective, its current threats and opportunities in our globalized world.

Chair: Manuel Montobbio, Chairman of Executive Committee of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain to the Council of Europe

Panelists:
- Xanana Gusmão, Former President of the Democratic Republic of East Timor, North-South Prize laureate (2002)
- Laura Papa, Founder of METAdrasi, Action for Migration and Development, Greece, North-South Prize laureate
- Carmen Fischer, Expert in global education advocacy and pedagogical support
- Peter Mousaferiadis, Chief Executive Officer and founder of Cultural Infusion

Org: Council of Europe, North-South Center
Chair of the North-South Centre’s Executive Committee, Ambassador Manuel Montobbio is a Spanish diplomat and a Doctor in Political Science. Ambassador Permanent Representative of Spain to the Council of Europe, he has previously hold different positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, and been Ambassador of Spain in Andorra and in Albania; and has been posted in San Salvador, Jakarta, Mexico and Guatemala. Parallel to his diplomatic career, he has carried out an academic and literary activity, and is the author of different books and several publications on peace processes, international and intercultural relations, political transitions and compared politics.
Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão led the Timorese resistance that secured independence for his people and became the first elected President of Timor-Leste before serving as its Prime Minister.

During the 24 year long occupation of Timor-Leste, Xanana Gusmão led the resistance struggle for self-determination and the liberation of his people. In 1981, he was elected leader of the Resistance and Commander-in-Chief of the FALINTIL (National Liberation Armed Forces of Timor-Leste). A year after Santa Cruz massacre, Xanana Gusmão, after 17 years of guerrilla warfare, was captured on November 20, 1992 in the capital Dili. He faced a kangaroo-court trial and was imprisoned in Indonesia. In prison, Xanana Gusmão continued to lead the Resistance, while studying Bahasa Indonesia, English and Law. He also painted and wrote poetry.

On 30 August 1999, the Timorese people voting in a UN-sponsored referendum overwhelmingly rejected the autonomy proposal put forth by Indonesia, signalling the end of the Indonesian occupation and the beginning of a UN transitional process. Xanana Gusmão was released on 7 September 1999.

In 2002 Xanana Gusmão was elected as the first President of the Republic since the Restoration of Independence and served in this position until May 2007. In 2007 he was elected Prime Minister of Timor-Leste and was re-elected in 2012. As Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmão led his people towards peace and built a strong foundation for a successful State and nation.

In December 2014, Xanana Gusmão announced that he would be stepping down as Prime Minister. On 16 February 2015, the leadership was passed on to the next generation when the VI Constitutional Government was sworn-in with Xanana Gusmão serving as the Minister for Planning and Strategic Investment. He held this position until September 2017, when the VII Constitutional Government was sworn in.

On 3rd February, 2016 the Sixth Constitutional Government appointed Xanana Gusmão as the Chief Negotiator for maritime boundaries. In this role, he led the negotiations through the compulsory conciliation process that led to the signing of the Maritime Boundary Treaty with Australia. He is currently still serving in this role, as well as serving as the Eminent Person of the g7+ Advisory Council.

Parliamentary elections in May 2018 saw the swearing-in of the Eighth Constitutional Government, a coalition of three parties led by CNRT of which Xanana Gusmão is President.
Since the early 1990s, Lora Pappas main interest and focus of work relates to the reception and integration of refugees and asylum-seekers. Through all her extensive experience in the field, Lora Pappa was aiming to find the best possible ways for consolidating efforts and facilitating life conditions of refugees and asylum-seekers, and, particularly, unaccompanied minors.

In 2010, after seven years as a part of the UNHCR and fifteen years working for Greek organizations, including the Council for Refugees and the National Youth Foundation, Lora Pappa founded NGO METAdrasi - Action for Migration and Development.

METAdrasi provides communication and interpretation in the context of asylum procedures, and of other State and IGO/NGO services for migrants and refugees, as well as ensures the protection of unaccompanied minors.

In 2015 Lora Pappa, as a founding member and President of METAdrasi, was awarded the North South Prize of the Council of Europe in a ceremony in Lisbon. The prize was awarded for her outstanding dedication in promoting North-South solidarity, human rights and democracy.

Lora Pappa has been awarded the North South Prize of the Council of Europe for 2015, for her outstanding dedication to promoting North-South solidarity, human rights and democracy. She was also honored with the “Legion of Honour” (2017) and “Order of Liberty” (2016) decorations of the French and the Portuguese state respectively, for her social contribution and exceptional work, while The Hellenic Initiative (THI) granted her the THI Leadership Award in 2016.

METAdrasi has received the “NGO of the Year” award at the “Hellenic Responsible Business Awards 2018”, the Collective Action Award “Models of Excellence 2017” by the “Citizen’s Movement for an Open Society”, as well as the first prize at PILnet’s European Pro Bono Awards 2016, in the category “Award for Exemplary Partnership in the Public Interest”.

Laura Papa, Founder of METAdrasi, Action for Migration and Development, Greece, North-South Prize laureate
Carmen Fischer, Expert in global education advocacy and pedagogical support

Carmen Fischer is a professional formal and non-formal educator based in Vienna, Austria. She is a long standing trainer in the field of Global Education, Intercultural Dialogue, and the process of Africa-Europe youth cooperation. Her most recent engagement, as a former member of the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe, has been the development of recommendations on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood, which were adopted in April 2019 within the broader context of the Council of Europe Action Plan.
Peter Mousaferiadis has had a career as a conductor and creative director. He has directed and produced some of the largest outdoor and indoor events in Australia including nine Australia Day Concerts, and numerous international Opening and Closing Ceremonies for clients including the United Nations and Parliament of World Religions. Peter holds numerous positions including the current chair of the Lahore International Conference on Culture, an Associate of the UNESCO Chair for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Asia-Pacific and is a Global Trustee of United Religions Initiative. In 2013, Peter developed the winning slogan for the UNAOC “Do One Thing for Diversity” campaign titled “Diversified We Grow” and in 2017 received the 2017 Peace Ambassador Award from the Centre of Peace Studies in Sri Lanka.

Peter founded Cultural Infusion in 2003 to promote intercultural harmony throughout Australia and worldwide. Cultural Infusion education program is delivered to more than 300,000 students annually throughout Australia. Cultural Infusion harnesses the power of art, education and technology through a suite of creative services, events, workshops, training courses, digital tools, consulting services and school programs to more than 300,000 students across Australia. In 2017, Cultural Infusion launched the Living Culture Program in Pakistan and Tanzania. This program places culture bearers into communities as a way of successfully transmitting and sustaining intangible cultural heritage. Cultural Infusion has been a winner of numerous international awards including the 2013 UNAOC Intercultural Innovation Award. www.culturalinfusion.org.au  www.ancestryatlas.com  www.jokosworld.com  www.soundinfusion.com.au