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EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW
(VENICE COMMISSION)

in co-operation with

THE NORTH-SOUTH CENTRE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Lisbon Forum 2006

**“Constitutionalism – the key to Democracy, Human Rights and
the Rule of Law”**

Lisbon, 28-29 November 2006

SYNOPSIS

The Lisbon Forum 2006, organised by the North-South Centre and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, under the auspices of the San Marino Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, was held from 28 to 29 November 2006 at the Portuguese Parliament in Lisbon.

The Forum, on « Constitutionalism: the key to democracy, rule of law and human rights », gathered one hundred participants, amongst whom were members of constitutional courts, parliaments, NGOs and the media, from both the North and the South.

The Forum focused on issues related to the characteristics and evolution of constitutional democratic systems from the North and the South, set within the broader framework of globalisation. Participants discussed the role of different actors in reinforcing constitutional democracies, and in ensuring the balance between powers, the protection of freedoms and the promotion of democratic values.

The participants identified the challenges linked to democratic processes, recalling how the constitution acts as a fundamental framework for the consolidation of democracy and social transformation. The importance of the role of parliaments, political parties and civil society organisations was also underlined. Participants called for the reinforcement of the dialogue between Northern and Southern constitutional courts, as well as for the support of projects and initiatives aimed at promoting democratic values and the involvement of both NGOs and the media in this project.