

Gender audit of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network

Introduction: Gender audit to review gender equality

A gender audit is a review of the gender equality situation in an organisation, association, etc. It helps clarifying gaps in gender equality which enables conducting an analysis of root causes at various levels of gender imbalances.

A gender audit is a basis for gender mainstreaming. As gender mainstreaming is a process, we can not do everything at the same time and need to prioritize. A gender audit will help us to know what to focus on, what to prioritize as it will show our strong and weak points.

Gender mainstreaming is a key method of reinforcing efforts to achieve gender equality. It means that attention is paid to the points of view, experiences and needs of both men and women in all activities and in all areas of the work and organizational structures.

Gender mainstreaming and gender equality is important for human rights because:

- it makes women and men equally central to the policy making process of the organisation
- it ensures participatory governance within the organisation
- it makes full use of human resources and capacities by involving both men and women
- it makes gender equality issues visible in the mainstream struggle for human rights
- it takes diversity into account within the organisation

Gender mainstreaming and gender equality is important for an organisation because it ensures an efficient way of using human resources and capacities – and thus the running of the organisation.

The Executive Committee took the lead in committing the EMHRN to gender equality by adopting a gender mainstreaming approach, focusing both on ensuring a gender awareness and sensitiveness transversal across the EMHRN structures and activities, as well as to reinforce attention to the fundamental human rights of women within the Network.

In 2008 the EMHRN published a Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit, a resource tool for assisting the EMHRN and its member organizations, as well as generalist human rights organizations, women's rights organizations and other civil society groups, in mainstreaming gender in their policies, programmes and interventions. As part of this ongoing process, which started more than four years ago, the EMHRN wanted to do a gender audit.

1. The aim of this gender audit of the EMHRN

The aim of this gender audit is to review the gender equality situation in the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN). This will help us:

- clarifying gaps in gender equality
- identify our weak and strong point in relation to our gender mainstreaming efforts;
- the principle obstacles and ways to overcome them; and finally:
- Recommendations for how to advance the gender mainstreaming work of the EMHRN.

2. The methodology

The methodology of this gender audit has been established following consultation with the EMHRN executive committee and the EMHRN gender working group. It is important to stress that it is by no means lead to an exhaustive gender audit, but it is a first diagnosis which will enable us to have an overall idea of the gender equality situation within the EMHRN.

In order to analyse the gender equality situation, we will look at three levels:

- the political level
- the level of organizational structures and culture
- the program level

At the political level, we will review the core EMHRN documents (statutes, by-laws, strategy paper, working group concept paper and by-laws, as well as the staff regulation). We will try to answer the question whether the political will to respect equality both as a value and principle exists and if there is a clear definition of our gender mainstreaming strategy included in these key documents.

At the level of organizational structures and culture, the aim is to measure the degree of male/female participation in the different structures of the EMHRN. To do so we are looking at gender disaggregated statistics for the following: the executive committee; the general assembly (Madrid 2006); EMHRN secretariat (current, 2008); EMHRN working groups (current, 2008); use of experts (last two years, i.e. 2006-2008); chairs/moderators at meetings¹ (last two years, i.e. 2006-2008) and mission teams (last two years, i.e. 2006-2008); Percentage of women's rights organization in the EMHRN (2008); and Members' presidents; boards, directors and staff (based on information from 2007). This will help us to get an overview of the extent to which we have gender balanced structures in the Network.

At the program level, i.e. in practice, we will look at the following questions:

- has the main EMHRN reports published during the last two years (2006-2008) been gender mainstreamed? (how many reports have a gender awareness and how many not)?
- Has gender equality been on the agenda of our meetings² in a way or another during the last two years (2006-2008)?
- Does the EMHRN conduct activities aimed at promoting and protecting gender equality
- What amount has been allocated to activities of gender equality – and what percentage does it constitute of the overall budget?

Answers to the questions will give an overview of what we mandated ourselves to work towards in relation to gender equality and what we are really doing in our daily work.

This will lead us to conclusions identifying:

- Our weak and strong points in relation to gender mainstreaming efforts
- The principle obstacles and ways to overcome them

¹ Limited to: executive committee meetings, working group meeting and seminars

² Ibid.

- Recommendations for how to advance the gender mainstreaming work of the EMHRN

These recommendations proposed to the General Assembly (December 2008) should then be developed into an EMHRN strategy on gender mainstreaming accompanied by a work plan for the next three years by the Gender Working Group and adopted by the Executive Committee.

3. The political level: political will towards gender equality and a clear gender mainstreaming strategy in the EMHRN core documents

This section will review:

- the EMHRN statutes,
- By-laws,
- working group concept paper and By-laws,
- strategy paper as well as
- staff regulation

The objective is to identify the political will of the EMHRN to respect equality both as a value and principle and if there is a clear definition of gender mainstreaming included in these key documents.

3.1 EMHRN STATUTES

The current EMHRN statutes were adopted at the General Assembly in Malta, December 2003³. Ahead of this year's General Assembly (December 2008), the Executive Committee has proposed amendments to the Statutes, which will be discussed and possibly adopted by the GA. We have thus decided to review both the current statutes as well as the proposed amended statutes.

In the current statutes, in relation to II. Objectives, point 2.1.c it is stated the objectives of the EMHRN are to: "support the development of democratic institutions, the promotion of rule of law, human rights, ***the equality of men and women***, and human rights education. There is thus a clear commitment and political will towards gender equality expressed. However, apart from this there is no further reference to equality and the only other attention to gender is the fact that in section 4.3.3. when talking about the meetings and division of tasks of the president, vice-president and treasurer, the form 's/he' is used.

In the proposed amended statutes, the following references to gender equality are made: In II Objectives, 2.1. the objectives of the EMHRN shall be as follows, the reference to '***equality between men and women***' remains, however, it elaborated to include a paragraph stating that the EMHRN fights "...***all forms of discrimination based on...gender, family situation, pregnancy...etc...***"

In the section 3.2. Condition governing Admission (to the EMHRN), there is a paragraph stating "***The EMHRN encourages the admission into its membership of women's rights organizations from the South and the North Mediterranean in order to achieve a significant representation of these organizations in its membership***".

³ <http://www.euromedrights.net/usr/00000011/00000015/00000194.pdf>

In the section 4.2.2. Participation in and Representation at the General Assembly, there is a paragraph stating that ***“The representation of Regular members and Associate Members must aim to represent men and women equally”***.

In the section 4.2.4 Agenda, Time Limits and Steering Committee (of the General Assembly), in the paragraph which starts with “The Executive Committee appoints Members representatives to chair the sessions. ***These representatives must include men and women in equal numbers,***In the next paragraph dealing with the steering committee of the General Assembly, it is restated that if a chair is unable to attend the GA, s/he is replaced ***...in full compliance with the same criteria of equal representation.***

In the section 4.3 Executive Committee, 4.3.1 Composition, there is a paragraph reading ***“The Executive Committee must strive to include an equal number of men and women”***. Another paragraph states that ***“The president and the Vice president may not be of the same sex”***. In the section 4.3.5 Elections, a paragraph mentions that ***“In the case of a tie vote between one male and one female candidate, the winner is the female candidate”***. The same holds true in relation to the election of vice president and treasurer by the Executive Committee.

3.2 EMHRN BY-LAWS

The current EMHRN By-laws have been amended by the Executive Committee in September 2008. It contains 9 articles, three of which make specific reference to gender.

Article 1, Executive Committee Meetings and appointments, first sentence states that ***“In any case and by any means, the Executive Committee is making sure that women and men composing the Executive Committee benefit, so far as possible, from the same opportunities”***. Further down, it says that the ***political referent for equality and women’ rights is a compulsory member of the steering group set up by the Executive Committee*** and continues ***“The steering group should be gender balanced”***.

Article 3: Admitting new members to the EMHRN, states that “with a view to the Executive Committee scrutinizing the candidacy of a new members, the Secretariat prepares a file which includes....”***the summary of the candidate organization’s activities along with the assessment of gender equality respect throughout the activities”***.

Article 5: EMHRN Secretariat, second paragraph reads ***“commitment to create and reinforce within the Network a working environment and a corporate culture respecting gender parity, equal representation at all decision levels, equal opportunity, as well as equal distribution of resources for women and men according to their respective duties within the EMHRN.”***

3.3 EMHRN STRATEGY PAPER

The EMHRN strategy paper was adopted at the General Assembly in Madrid, December 2006⁴. It is the shared vision of the Network, its values and objectives. Under 2.3. Key Values of the Network, a point on ***“gender equality and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women***

⁴ <http://www.euromedrights.net/usr/00000011/00000015/00000035/00000695.pdf>

and women's participation in public life " is stated. Under 2.4 General Objectives of the Network, the point on "to support the development of democratic institutions alongside the promotion of the rule of law, *the equality of men and women*, public education and awareness as well as human rights education per se" is restated. Under 3. Strategic Orientations of the EMHRN, 3.1.2 The Barcelona Process, a paragraph regarding women's rights is included reading "*As regards women's rights, the tendency has until recently been to consider these as an issue of 'religious norms and cultural traditions - a domestic rather than a public issue, and still comparatively little importance is given to gender issues in practise while gender discrimination in law and practice remains one of the most blatant features of the region'*".

In 3.2, Two programmes, under 3.2.1 Human Rights and democracy, in the programmes which the EMHRN has put in place to deal with the human rights challenges in the region, "*women's rights, gender equality and mainstreaming*" has been identified as one of four issues of regional strategic importance⁵ and a whole paragraph is devoted to explaining why "gender equality and mainstreaming is a key issue"⁶.

3.4 EMHRN WORKING GROUP CONCEPT PAPER AND BY-LAWS

The EMHRN working group concept paper is a paper outlining the EMHRN working group as a working methodology of the EMHRN. This paper has been distributed to all the EMHRN working groups during October and November 2008 and will be discussed and possibly adopted at the EMHRN General Assembly in December 2008.

The EMHRN Working Group By-Laws outlining the roles and responsibilities of the WG members and interlocutors have also been distributed to all working groups for comments as well as to the Executive Committee. They will be discussed and possibly adopted by the new Executive Committee in 2009.

The EMHRN working group concept paper states under B. Mission and values of the EMHRN "*gender equality as a human right and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women and women's participation in all spheres of life*". It continues by a paragraph stating "*The EMHRN has adopted the principle of gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy to be applied in all structures and all programmes as a means to achieve gender equality*". Under D. Working Groups as a Working Methodology of the EMHRN, it mentions the different working groups, hereunder the *group on women's rights and gender mainstreaming*. It has a specific section on gender mainstreaming, section *E: Gender Mainstreaming of Working Groups' policies, strategies, actions and activities*, which reads: *In accordance with the EMHRN strategy, the Working Groups must adopt a gender mainstreaming approach and work systematically on promotion and protection of gender equality* (which then is defined in a foot note as "*i.e. adopt the gender mainstreaming approach in the conceptualisation, design, research and gathering of data and information, analysis, reporting, documentation and writing of conclusions and recommendations. Gender sensitiveness should be included in all aspects of the work*")

⁵ EMHRN Strategy, page 12 (English version).

⁶ EMHRN Strategy, page 13 (English version)

The Working Group By-Laws, under C. Membership criteria, point 16 states that “*effort shall be made to ensure equal participation of men and women in the WG*”. There is thus a commitment to the principle of gender equality, but it is not as strongly stated as in the concept paper.

3.5 EMHRN STAFF REGULATION

The EMHRN staff regulation was agreed upon in Spring 2008 and have been included in all staff contracts. The staff regulation basically outlines the rules and regulations pertaining to salaried staff working for the EMHRN.

The staff regulation contains 48 articles, outlining the rights and duties of staff in the Copenhagen office as well as special rules pertaining to the Brussels office. Only three articles deals with gender related issues. Article 23 outlines the rules for maternity /parental leave while article 28 (and 47 respectively for the Brussels office) deals with violence and moral and sexual harassment at the work place.

4. The level of organisational structures and culture: Male /female participation in the different structures of the EMHRN

As mentioned in the methodology outline, in this chapter, we want to look at the male/female participation in the different structures of the EMHRN. While counting numbers alone will not tell much, it is, however, useful as a means to get an overview of the extent to which we have gender balanced structures in the Network.

Gender aggregated information has been gathered in the following tables:

	Women	Men
Executive Committee members	5	7
General assembly (Madrid 2006)	43	64
Executive Committee	2	5
Regular members	11	32
Individual members	4	3
Associate members	4	1
New members	4	10
observers	12	9
Staff	6	4
EMHRN Secretariat members	12	8
EMHRN working groups members	46	48
Gender	14	1
Palestine, Israel, Palestinians (PIP)	7	8
Freedom of Association (FOA)	3	10
Human Rights Education (HRE)	7	6
Justice	5	14
Migration, refugees and asylum seekers	10	9
Use of experts	28	25
FOA 2007	1	3
FOA 2008	6	9
Gender	5	0

HRE	1	3
Justice	2	5
Migration	11	5
PIP	2	0
Chairs & Moderators at meetings	112	124
EC meetings	18	34
February 23-26 2006 (Paris)	1	4
August 4-6 2006 (Copenhagen)	2	3
1-3 December 2006 (Petra)	3	4
16-18 March 2007 (Lisbon)	2	3
28-30 September 2007 (Ljubljana)	3	6
December 14-16 2007 (Brussels)	0	5
April 18-20 2008 (Casablanca)	4	3
September 12-14 2008 (Brussels)	3	6
FOA meetings	4	11
3-4 March 2007 (Copenhagen) WG	1	5
17-18 December 2007 (Brussels) WG	0	3
23 and 24 May 2008 (Cairo) WG	1	2
8-9 November (Amman) WG	2	1
Gender	30	4
30 November and 1 December 2007 (Paris) WG	9	0
May 9-10, 2008 (Cairo) WG	6	2
October 11-12, 2008 (Brussels) WG	6	0
October 10, 2008 (Brussels) Coordination meeting	3	1
May 11, 2008 (Cairo) WG	6	1
HRE	23	19
26 June 2008 (Paris) – strategy meeting	2	2
23-25 February 2007 (Valetta) WG	2	2
27-28 October 2007 (Ankara) WG	5	2
1-2 March 2008 (Istanbul) WG	2	3
4-5 October 2008 (Madrid) WG	3	3
23-29 July 2007 (Cyprus) Summer school	5	1
21-27 July 2008 (Turkey) Summerschool	4	6
MAWG	14	12
16-17 December 2006 (Amman) WG	3	3
10-12 October 2008 (Rabat) WG	2	4
19-21 October 2007 (Cairo) WG	4	3
11-13 April 2008 (Madrid) WG	5	2
PIP	10	8
16-18 June 2006 (Brussels) WG	2	2
23-25 February 2007 (Berlin) WG	4	2
6-8 April 2008 (Brussels) WG	2	1
8-9 November 2008 (Brussels) WG	2	3
Justice	13	36
10 November 2006 (Casablanca) WG	1	3
11-12 November 2006 (Casablanca) seminar	1	5
8-9 September 2007 (Paris) seminar	0	3
13-14 January 2007 (Amman) seminar	1	3
10-11 March 2007 (Beirut) seminar	1	5
9-10 February 2008 (Brussels) WG	3	7
11 February 2008 (Brussels) seminar (regional)	0	2
24-25 October 2008 (Rabat) follow-up seminar	2	2
8-9 November 2008 (Istanbul) WG	4	6
Mission teams	3	3
PIP missions	3	1
Solidarity missions	0	2

Percentage of women's rights organizations in the EMHRN:

4 (6) out of 69, i.e. 5.7% and (8.6%)

[Sisterhood is Global Institute \(SIGI\)](#)

[Democratic Association of Moroccan Women \(ADFM\)](#)

[Tunisian Association of the Democratic Women](#)

[Collectif 95 Maghreb Egalité](#)

[Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies*](#)

Kvinna to Kvinna (women to women) *

* membership to be ratified by the upcoming GA in December 2008

Information from member organizations was gathered in August 2007. Following a questionnaire sent out to all members, members were asked to provide information on the sex of their president, chair persons, board members, director(s) and staff. Kindly note, that this table is not complete as all EMHRN members did not respond

Gender Information for Member Organizations aug-07

	Country	Name of Organization	Presidents		Chair persons		Board members		Directors		Staff	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	DK	Rehabilitation and Research Center for Torture Victims	0	0	1	0	7	4	1	0	27	57
2	LEB	Rene Moawad Foundation	0	1	0	2	4	2	2	1	96	77
3	TR	Human Rights Association (IHD)	0	1	0	1	23	11	0	0	2	2
4	GB	Bar Human Rights Committee	0	0	1	0	9	3	0	0	9	1
5	F/ALG	Collectif des Familles Disparu en Algerie	0	1	0	1	8	10	0	1	0	3
6	PAL	Al-Mizan Center for Human Rights	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	17	12
7	TUN	Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie	0	1	0	0	6	1	0	0	1	0
8	MOR	Organisations Marocaine des Droits Humains	0	1	0	1	36	15	1	0	3	4
9	LEB	Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights	1	0	0	0	7	3	0	0	0	0
10	IRL	80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World	0	0	1	0	4	3	1	0	2	3
11	MOR	CMF - MENA	1	0	1	0	5	4	0	0	2	2
12	ISR	B'Tselem	0	0	0	1	11	4	0	1	14	15
13	SYR	Damascus Center for Theoretical and Civil Rights Studies	1	0	0	1	2	4	0	0	2	0
14	GR	Greek Helsinki Monitor ⁷	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	7	8

⁷ Withdraw from the EMHRN 2008

15	The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel	ISR	0	0	1	0	7	3	0	1	28	10
16	Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates	TUN	0	1	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	4
17	Danish Institute for Human Rights	DK	1	0	1	0	4	3	1	0	41	76
18	International Helsinki Committee	A	1	0	0	0	6	2	1	0	3	9
19	Palestinian Center for Human Rights	PAL	1	0	1	0	5	2	1	0	29	15
20	Bruno Kreisky Foundation for Human Rights	A	1	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
21	Tampere Peace Research Institute	SF	0	1	1	0	12	7	0	1	7	10
22	Comité pour les Respect des Libertés et des droits de l'Homme en Tunisie	F	1	0	0	0	7	2	0	0	0	1
23	Association Marocaine des droits humain	MOR	0	1	0	0	50	25	0	0	2	3
24	Humanist Committee on Human Rights	NL	0	0	1	0	3	6	0	1	6	18
25	Al-Haq	PAL	1	0	1	0	4	5	1	0	17	15
26	Italian Refugee Council (CIR)	I	1	0	1	0	16	2	1	0	3	17
27	Beirut Bar Association	LEB	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
28	Human Rights Center, University of Essex	UK	0	0	1	0	9	1	1	0	20	27
29	Ligue des Droits de L'Homme	F	1	0	0	0	29	19	0	1	2	15
30	Sisterhood is Global Institute/ Jordan	JOR	0	1	0	1	0	5	0	1	3	19
31	Libyan League for Human Rights	LIB	1	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0
32	Fédération des Tunisiens pour une citoyenneté des deux rives	F	1	0	0	0	15	7	0	0	7	4
33	Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	Regional	1	0	1	0	4	1	1	0	15	5
34	Amman Center for Human Rights	JOR	1	0	0	0	17	3	1	0	5	2
35	Arab Association for Human Rights	ISR	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	5	1
36	OMCT	CH	1	0	0	0	6	3	1	0	7	8
37	Article 19	GB	0	0	0	1	2	4	0	1	9	16
38	International Service for Human Rights	CH	0	1	0	1	7	4	1	0	8	9
39	FIDH	F	0	1	0	0	14	8	1	0	12	24

40	Iraqi Human Rights Association	DK	1	0	0	0	6	1	0	0	0	0
Totals			19	12	15	11	368	189	20	11	412	493
%			70	44	58	42	66	34	65	35	46	54

5. The program level: gender mainstreaming efforts and activities

This chapter will look at the practice, i.e. what the EMHRN has actually achieved in relation to gender mainstreaming of our activities.

We will focus on the following three areas:

- reports – and to which extent the EMHRN reports published the last two years have been gender mainstreamed
- the topic of gender mainstreaming and whether it has been on the agenda of our meetings⁸ during the last two years
- specific activities to promote and protect gender equality – and what budget of the overall budget has been allocated to gender equality promotion

5.1 EMHRN REPORTS

The EMHRN has published 14 reports from in 2006-2008⁹. Most introductions to EMHRN reports include a paragraph on the key values that guide the Network and include “gender equality and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women and women’s participation in public life” as well as “support the development of democratic institutions alongside the promotion of the rule of law, *the equality of men and women*, public education and awareness as well as human rights education per se.

Apart from that, the degree to which the reports are gender mainstreamed varies greatly. One out of the 14 reports is specifically on gender equality: *Achieving Gender Equality is Possible and Necessary*¹⁰.

The report on *Human Rights Education in the Euro-Med region*¹¹ has included questions on gender perspectives in the questionnaire that the research team sent out to EMHRN members and used as a basis for their research. Both the findings of the survey¹², as well as the main challenges identified¹³ include issues related to gender. The report also includes several examples of activities by women’s

⁸ Executive Committee meetings and working group meetings

⁹ <http://www.emhrn.net/423>

¹⁰ <http://www.emhrn.net/pages/339>

¹¹ Human Right Education in the Euro-Mediterranean Region, see:

¹² The findings of the survey in relation to gender shows that while the majority of the organizations claim to take gender consideration into account when organizing events, the majority of lecturers are still older men.

¹³ Many considered one of the main challenges disseminating the culture of gender equality and religious freedom and conservative social heritage, built on values, customs and traditions which encourage patriarchal authority, controlling women’s lives and limiting women’s participation

rights organisations¹⁴, and a presentation of the EMHRN Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit and its purpose etc.

The country reports on *the independence and the impartiality of the judiciary in Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia* (3 reports) all recommend that the country in question lift its reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – but that is about it in relation to dealing with any gender related issue. The report on Morocco contains one gender aggregated statistics¹⁵, the report on Jordan recommends the incorporation (into domestic law) of all agreements relating to the CEDAW, while the report on Tunisia contains a, albeit small, paragraph reading “*However, in reality, justice has always been a male justice. Nowadays, women have more access to judiciary professions. The female breakthrough within the Tunisian judiciary took place in 1967- 1968 with the first female graduate and continued so as to represent 28% of the personnel in 2005, with 470 women out of a total of 1.698*”.

The regional report on Initiatives in the Field of Judicial Reform in the Euro-Mediterranean Region from the outset states that the provision of legal aid, i.e. improving access to marginalized groups and women would not be the subject of coverage of the report. However, it does mention a regional as well as a national initiative addressing women¹⁶.

The report on Freedom of Association in the Euro-Mediterranean Region 2007 emphasises that FOA is of crucial importance to women, however, the freedom and ability of women to enjoy the right to form and join associations are often undermined by lack of access to and control of economic and political resources. In addition, they are penalised by a variety of cultural standards and social values within their own communities. Governments therefore have a duty to provide an environment that is conducive to the participation of women in the life of associations and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against them. The effective enjoyment of the right to freedom of association is crucially linked to the movement in favour of gender equality and to feminist initiatives. It makes recommendations to the EU and the 11 Partner countries in relation to the “*necessity to widen the access of women to the associative life and encourage their participation and empowerment in the management of associations*”. In recommendations to the authorities it says to “*Eliminate all forms of discrimination based on gender, race, language, religion, political opinions, sexual orientation or minority status when dealing with civil society organizations*”.

Furthermore, in each of the individual country reports, the following question has been asked:

(4) Are there any restrictions (de jure or de facto) promoting, limiting or banning the participation of women in an association’s positions (e.g. board of directors)?

¹⁴ Such as the radio commercials of the ADFM youth group on different equality and women’s rights issues as well as Community Partnership for Women Empowerment programs of SIGI (in appendix 4, sample case studies).

¹⁵ On the grades of magistrates, it is noted that on the exceptional grade, there are 498 magistrates of whom 92 are women.

¹⁶ **The American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative:** supporting the Arab Women’s Legal Network (AWLN) and the Avocat Sans Frontiere / EMHRN initiative on “Supporting Better Access to Justice for the Most Vulnerable Groups in Algeria”

It should be mentioned that the Freedom of Association report 2008 which is to be published on December 9, 2008 will contain a chapter on gender and freedom of association.

The reports on the European Neighbourhood Policy and its Action Plans with the different Mediterranean Partners differ substantially in relation to the inclusion of women's rights and gender equality.

The *Human Rights in the EU-Morocco Action Plan under the ENP*¹⁷ in the first chapter on thematic recommendations has a section C on women's rights dealing with 1. Implementation of provisions on women's rights and 2. recommendations of women's rights.

It is quite a substantive chapter analysing the issue of women's rights in the Action Plan, as well as recommendations in relation to implementation of provisions related to Action no. 6, the criminal code, the family code, the nationality code, and violence against women. Chapter 2 outlines general recommendations on women's rights followed by recommendations related to specific actions on women's rights in the Action Plan.

The European Neighbourhood Policy: Human Rights in EU-Egypt Relations: Recommendations of Egyptian Non Governmental Organizations for the EU-Egypt Action Plan deals with the issue of women's rights which is a main concern of the Action Plan. It contains seven detailed recommendations under the section XI Women's Rights. Also in section I, part B on the strategy plan and C on the financial initiatives refers to gender equality.

*The EU-Israel Action Plan within the ENP*¹⁸ saw two women's rights organisations among the participants at the training in both Ramallah and Tel Aviv, but does not mention anything else in relation to women's rights or gender equality. The same holds true for the *Third Annual Review on Human Rights in the EU-Israel Relations*¹⁹, which only quotes the 'task' of the European Community as "...to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection, equality between men and women"...

A Human Rights Review on the EU and Israel: Mainstreaming or Selectively Extinguishing Human Rights? The report only mentions that the first item in the Action Plan under the sub-title "Democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms" states that the EU and Israel are committed to "promote evaluation and monitoring of policies from the perspective of gender equality" (under the heading of sub-committee on political dialogue and cooperation) but that is all.

¹⁷ Human Rights in the EU-Morocco Action Plan under the European Neighbourhood Policy: NGO Assessment and Recommendations for the Implementation of the Action Plan, see: <http://www.emhrn.net/usr/00000026/00000027/00002060.pdf>

¹⁸ The EU-Israel Action Plan within the European Neighbourhood Policy: What is the impact of the EU-Israel Action Plan on Human Rights in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories? Training & Seminar April, 2007, see <http://www.euromedrights.net/402>

¹⁹ Third Annual Review on Human Rights in EU-Israel Relations: Accommodating to the 'special' case of Israel 2005-2006, see <http://www.euromedrights.net/401>

*The training guide on human rights instruments in Euro-Mediterranean Relations*²⁰ has a whole section (II) on the EU Commitments towards women's rights: Gender mainstreaming. In section III, assessment of the multilateral level, an analysis of the integration of women's rights into the EMP is made – and reference to the Istanbul Plan of Action. It states that human rights and gender equality are a priority of the ENP and serve as criteria for the future evaluation of the action plans, and recommend that NGO actions in the framework of the EMP and the ENP pay particular attention to gender mainstreaming which should systematically be addressed in all policies, i.e. in meetings, documents produced and programmes.

5.2 GENDER EQUALITY ON THE AGENDA OF THE EMHRN MEETINGS

Gender equality on the agenda of the Executive Committee meetings

As all Executive Committee (EC) meetings have on the agenda 'secretariat report', which includes information from the gender working group, it can be argued that the issue has been on the agenda of all meetings. However, if we look more specifically if there has been a specific point on the agenda relating to gender equality, ***we find that eight EC meetings have been held from 2006-2008, and that 6 of these have had a specific point on gender on the agenda.***

At the EC meeting 23-26 February 2006, point 7 was "Program on gender mainstreaming and possible opening of a focal point in the South. At the meeting 4-6 August 2006, point 7 dealt with "Gender Mainstreaming in the work of the EC" and included training for the EC members on gender mainstreaming²¹. At the meeting 1-2 December 2006 point 4. Political debate: Evaluation of the human rights situation in the region included as 'element to consider', "c) The Istanbul Conference". The meeting 16-18 March 2007 had point 5 on the "Euro-Med Ministerial Meeting in Istanbul on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society. The following two meetings, 28-30 September and 14-16 December 2007 did not have any gender related issues on the agenda. The meeting 18-20 April 2008 has as point 9 "Follow-up on the Istanbul Action Plan" and saw the participation of the coordinator of the gender project. Finally, the EC meeting in Brussels 12-14 September discussed the gender audit.

Gender equality on the agenda of the working group meetings

The EMHRN had meetings of the working group on freedom of association; human rights education; justice; Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians; migration, refugees and asylum seekers; as well as gender and women's rights. While gender has rarely been on the agenda as a specific point of the agenda, presentations on the EMHRN and its work, may have seen – and in certain cases for sure saw – the mentioning of the EMHRN commitment to gender mainstreaming.

The Working Group on Freedom of Association (FOA WG) ***held four meetings in 2007-2008²² out of which two had gender on the agenda*** – even if more indirect as it was not a specific point on the agenda.

²⁰ See: <http://www.euromedrights.net/356>

²¹ As well as some important decisions in relation to gender mainstreaming which were unfortunately not all implemented.

²² The Group was only created in 2007 and started working on producing the Reviews on FOA in the region.

The first meeting 3-4 March 2007 did not have gender on the agenda, while the meeting 17-18 December took the decision to contact the gender WG to set indicators for the next Review to ensure the integration of the gender dimension in the Review. The meeting 23-24 May 2008 did not have gender on the agenda. The meeting 8-9 November 2008 discussed how to follow up on the chapter on gender and freedom of association under session 4: Discussion on methodology and content for the third review – and decided that gender should be mainstreamed in all chapters and indicators developed in this regard.

The Working Group on Human Rights Education held 6 meetings and two summer schools from 2006-2008. While gender was not a specific point on the agenda of any of the working group meetings, the summer school 2007 had half a day on gender mainstreaming while the summer school 2008 has a workshop on promoting gender equality in conservative contexts.

The working group on Justice has held 4 working group meetings, one regional seminar, and 4 national seminars and one national follow-up seminar, *i.e. 10 meetings on justice have been held and none has had gender on the agenda.* However, the last working group meeting in Istanbul in November 2008 has planned a session on gender mainstreaming, which was postponed to take place after the constitution of the new working group.

The working group on Palestine, Israel and the *Palestinians (PIP) met four times in 2006-2008 and none of the meetings has gender on the agenda.*

The working group on Migration, Asylum seekers and Refugees (MAWG) met four times in 2006-2008, and at two of the meetings gender was on the agenda. At the meeting 16-17 December 2006 the ToR of the report on violence against migrant women was discussed. At the meeting 11-13 April 2008 the report was discussed.

The Working Group on Gender and Women's Rights met 4 times in 2006-2008 and convened 2 training seminars on gender mainstreaming in 2007 and a coordination meeting in 2008. Gender was – of course – on the agenda of all meetings.

6. EMHRN ACTIVITIES TO INSTITUTIONALISE GENDER EQUALITY

6.1 Gender Mainstreaming Training

As mentioned above the Executive Committee meeting in August 2006 in Copenhagen included a training session on gender mainstreaming for the Executive Committee members and EMHRN staff attending.

This was followed up with a *workshop on gender mainstreaming at the EMHRN General Assembly in Madrid 2006*. The workshop consisted both of an introduction to gender mainstreaming as well as presentations by two EMHRN members on their gender mainstreaming experiences.

At the 3 days Staff Development Days in June 2008 a full day was devoted to *gender mainstreaming training of all staff members*.

The ToR for the Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit (see below) was presented at the Gender Working Group meeting in Rabat, April 2006 and the WG members received basic training on gender mainstreaming. It was then tested *at two gender mainstreaming training seminars with 14 and 13 participants respectively in Beirut, May 2007, and Paris November 2007.*

A two day gender mainstreaming training was also conducted for a member organisation (the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies) in July 2008.

6.2 Gender mainstreaming publications

The Gender Working Group in 2006 decided to follow up on the report from 2002 on “The Integration of Women’s Rights from the MENA into the EMP”²³ and published the report: “*Achieving Gender Equality in the Mediterranean: Change is Possible and Necessary*”. The first part of the report dealt with the main advances for women’s rights and gender equality since 2002. The second part addressed the main common challenges to the promotion and protection of women’s rights and gender equality in the region and means to address these challenges. The third part put forward recommendations for how to promote gender equality and women’s rights within the EU framework.

The WG also engaged Lina Abou Habib, a renowned Lebanese gender expert, to write the *Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit (GMRK)*. The GMRK was tested at three training seminars (see above) and amended accordingly until it was finalised in autumn 2008. It has been distributed to EMHRN members attending the GA and will be further distributed to relevant partners and target groups during 2009. Furthermore, the Gender working group has recommended that member organisations start gender mainstreaming using the Kit – and that they will provide assistance if needed.

6.3 Gender mainstreaming advocacy: The Istanbul Plan of Action to strengthen women’s role in Society

The EMHRN has taken the lead within civil society in relation to advocacy on the Istanbul Plan of Action (IPA) as it sees the IPA as an important common Euro-Med platform to promote gender equality.

In October 2006 the EMHRN drafted recommendations on achieving gender equality for the 5 Year Plan of Action to the Euro-Med Ministerial Conference on ‘Strengthening the role of women in Society’, which were widely distributed within the EU. The recommendations were also endorsed by the Euro-Med Civil Forum in Marrakesh and presented to the Ministerial Meeting. Furthermore, the recommendations were supported by seven Jordanian women’s rights and human rights organisations. EMHRN Moroccan members issued a joint letter to the Moroccan Prime Minister asking for a more progressive stand on the IPA, more in line with Morocco’s recent positive development in the field of gender equality.

The recommendations were also presented during three days of lobbying by members of the Gender WG of the EU Commission, the Council (including the Finnish Presidency), the European Parliament as well as the Jordanian and Moroccan ambassadors to the EU.

²³ See: <http://www.emhrn.net/423>

In November 2006 the EMHRN published its position on the Ministerial Conclusions on the IPA and later recommendations in relation to the implementation of the IPA.

The EMHRN participated in the ‘Strengthening of the role of women in Society Euro-Med Ad hoc meeting held in Brussels in October 2007 presenting its note on the review mechanism of the IPA. The EMHRN also participated in the ‘Follow up on the Istanbul Conclusions, the thematic Ad hoc meeting on women’s political participation and made a presentation assessing women’s political participation in the Mediterranean and gave recommendations for enhancing participation in the scope of the EMP.

Ahead of the Ad Hoc meeting on the planning of the preparations of the 2009 Follow-up Conference 13 October 2008, the EMHRN published recommendation to the 2009 conference and had a three day lobbying of the EU institutions.

The EMHRN launched in 2008 its initiative on “Follow-up and Monitoring of the implementation of the Istanbul Action Plan” and engaged three researchers who are currently preparing a shadow report on the implementation of the IPA which will be ready in 2009.

It held two coordination meetings in Cairo and Brussels in May and October to gather NGOs to raise awareness of the IPA, and plan a similar meeting in December with Spanish NGOs, as well as lobbying meeting with the authorities.

6.4 Systemizing gender mainstreaming within the WGs

Gender balance was include in the criteria for selection of working group members for the working groups on human rights education, justice, freedom of association and PIP in 2007. Throughout 2008 ToR of reports were systematically sent to the gender WG coordinator to be checked for gender sensitivity.

6.5 GENDER EQUALITY BUDGET

When looking at the budgets for 2006 and 2007 we can see that 10 percent of the project budget was allocated for the gender and women’s rights project, but that only 4 percent and 8 percent respectively was used. In the revised budget for 2008 about 6,5 % is allocated – and will most likely be spent. In the budgets for 2009 and 2010 7,1 % and 7,2 % of the overall project budget has been allocated to the gender and women’s rights project.

7. Analysis and recommendations

7.1 The political level: political will towards gender equality and a clear gender equality policy stated in the EMHRN core documents

EMHRN STATUTES

It is clear that the proposed amended statutes are more gender sensitive than the current EMHRN statutes as they in relation to membership; general assembly participation as well as representation in the executive committee clearly state the principle of equal representation, i.e. gender balance, as well as encouraging more women’s rights organisation to become members of the EMHRN. This shows a

clear political will towards gender equality both as a value (as an objective of the EMHRN) as well as a principle (in the gender balance in the representation in the bodies of the EMHRN). Despite the fact that the value and principle of gender equality is present, a clear statement of the EMHRN commitment to a gender equality policy is lacking.

EMHRN BY-LAWS

The By-Laws show a clear commitment to gender equality with reference not only to ensuring gender balance in the structures, but also that men and women benefit equally from the same opportunities both in the Executive Committee as well as in the Secretariat. Furthermore, the commitment to assessing new member organisations commitment to gender equality and having the political referent as compulsory member of the steering committee shows a political will to endorse the value and principle of gender equality, however, a clear statement of the EMHRN commitment to a gender equality policy is lacking.

Recommendations:

- Produce a clear EMHRN gender equality policy paper
- Full Compliance with the EMHRN statutes and bylaws

EMHRN STRATEGY PAPER

It is interesting to note that women's right have now been extended to include 'gender equality and mainstreaming', clearly stating the commitment to gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality as part of the EMHRN strategy.

Recommendations

- Ensure clear stating of the commitment to gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality as part of the EMHRN strategy for 2008-2010.
- Take all necessary measures to ensure meeting the commitments to gender mainstreaming and achieving gender equality as part of the EMHRN strategy for 2008-2010.

EMHRN WORKING GROUP CONCEPT PAPER AND BY-LAWS

The WG Concept paper states the value of gender equality as a key value of the EMHRN as well as clearly expressing the EMHRN commitment to a gender mainstreaming strategy, stressing that this strategy is transversal and thus compulsory for the working groups to take into consideration as well.

The Working Group By-Laws, under C. Membership criteria, point 16 states that ***"effort shall be made to ensure equal participation of men and women in the WG"***. There is thus a commitment to the principle of gender equality, but it is not as strongly stated as in the concept paper.

EMHRN STAFF REGULATION

It is interesting to note that while the EMHRN By-laws mentions creating a working environment and a gender equality sensitive culture, this is not reflected in the EMHRN staff regulation.

Il est intéressant de noter que bien que le règlement intérieur du REMDH prévoit la création de conditions de travail et d'une culture d'entreprise respectueuse de la parité, cela n'apparaît pas dans la Convention qui régit le personnel du REMDH.

Recommendations

- Review EMHRN staff regulation and make it gender sensitive complying with EMHRN bylaws

7.2 The level of organizational structures and culture: Male /female participation in the different structures of the EMHRN

First of all, it would be interesting to have had these statistics from earlier, as e.g. the first two Executive Committees only had one female member (out of 10). Now a gender balance has almost been achieved at the level of the Executive Committee. The same can be said of the total members in the working groups, however, when looking into the details it is symptomatic that the gender working group only has one male member, while the Justice working group has a big majority of men – confirming the stereotype that gender is still considered a women's rights issue instead of an issue concerning men and women equally. In the same vein, the working group on justice is still reflecting the majority of men in the legal professions. It is also encouraging to notice the close to gender balance in relation to moderators and chairs of meetings, even if there is still room for improvement. The gender balance has been achieved in the field of use of experts and mission teams.

It just appears that the EMHRN have to a great extent gender balance in its structures. However, it is very disturbing to notice that among its 69 members, only 4 (or 6 depending whether we count the current actual member or members who will most likely have the membership ratified at the GA) organisations are women's rights organisation²⁴. **This constitutes only 5.8% (or 8.7%).**

In relation to the gender disaggregated information from the EMHRN member organizations, it is interesting to note, the lack of gender balance when it comes to board members and directors, who are overwhelmingly men. In contrast to staff members who are mostly women. This confirms the structure whereby men have decision making and leading posts in organisations while women constitute the majority of the subordinate staff.

Recommendations

- Put gender balance as a criteria for membership in the working groups and encourage member organizations to have male candidates for the gender working group and female candidates for the justice working group
- Strongly encourage membership of women's rights organizations at the Network.
- Members of the Network are strongly encouraged to take necessary measures to ensure equal opportunities for women to occupy leading posts in their organizations

²⁴However, it has to be noted that several generalist human rights organizations, such as the French League for Human Rights, does extensive work on women's rights and gender issues.

- Work on gender mainstreaming of member organizations of the EMHRN

7.3 The program level: gender mainstreaming efforts and activities

EMHRN REPORTS

The EMHRN published 14 reports from 2006-2008. The degree to which the reports are gender mainstreamed varies greatly and thus indicates a lack of systemized gender mainstreaming.

Recommendations

- Reports should assess access of women and men to human rights protection and complaints mechanisms and institutions and deliver recommendations dedicated to ensure equal access.
- Reports should clearly identify, address and deliver suggestions dedicated to removing instances of gender discrimination
- The international human rights standards of gender equality (e.g. CEDAW) should be enshrined in the demands and action plans of the Network and its members
- Gender issues should be fully and systematically integrated into all human rights monitoring reports and reporting mechanisms of the EMHRN and its members. This applies to ALL international human rights obligations (i.e. beyond CEDAW monitoring)

GENDER EQUALITY ON THE AGENDA OF THE EMHRN MEETINGS

Gender issues have been a point on the agenda of most Executive Committee meetings, but hardly at any working group meetings (as a specific point on the agenda). Again, there is a lack of systematically ensuring gender issues on the agenda of the EMHRN meetings.

Recommendations

- To have the EMHRN commitment to gender mainstreaming clearly stated at the first meeting of the Executive Committee as well as the first meeting of all working group
- To do training on gender mainstreaming for the EC and the working groups

EMHRN ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE AND PROTECT GENDER EQUALITY

The EMHRN, through the Working Group on Gender and Women's Rights, have been doing activities in relation to gender mainstreaming in the fields of training, publications and advocacy. In relation to the EMHRN internal structures, it has worked on gender mainstreaming of core documents as well as reports. While these efforts have been successful, they need to be continued and reinforced – especially on the level of member organisations.

Recommendations

- Training on gender mainstreaming should be provide to each new Executive Committee and each working group
- The GMRK publications should be widely distributed to all EMHRN members
- Training for member organisations using the GMRK should be encouraged and supported where the member organisation take the lead in the organising it with the support of the EMHRN
- The EMHRN should continue its efforts in relation to the Istanbul Plan of Action

GENDER EQUALITY BUDGET

The budget allocated to gender is less than 10% of the total project budget – and it is becoming less for the years to come. As gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a transversal strategy of the EMHRN, the percentage should be increased to at least 15% so as to give the adequate means to allow for the implementation of a sustained gender mainstreaming strategy.

STRONG AND WEAK POINTS IN RELATION TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING EFFORTS

Taking into consideration that the EMHRN only started committing itself to gender mainstreaming in 2006, it can be said to have advanced quite well. *This is mainly due to a **strong political will and dispositions at the highest level within the organisation towards gender mainstreaming***. It is quite illustrative that gender has been an explicit point on the agenda of nearly all Executive Committee meetings and that the President of the EMHRN participated in the coordination meeting on the Istanbul Action Plan in Brussels in October 2008.

*Another strong point is the fact that **gender mainstreaming expertise** existed at a high level in the organisation and that a willingness to take the responsibility and hard work to start and advance the gender mainstreaming efforts was there.* This political will was also present – and particularly encouraged – at the executive level (who took part as trainer in the training sessions) reinforced with a strong and devoted coordinator.

A further strong point is that a ***specific gender equality policy exists***, which, however, still needs to be clearly formulated and disseminated to all EMHRN members.

A final strong point is that the ***structures to support and hopefully sustain gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN now exist*** – i.e. the value and principle is inscribed in the core EMHRN documents (in the proposed amended statutes, the new by-laws, the working group concept paper and by-laws, and the strategy paper).

The main weak point is that some – if not many – of ***our member organisations have not yet adopted a gender mainstreaming approach***. The EMHRN has not been yet successful in communicating the commitment to gender mainstreaming to our members – and to engage them in gender mainstreaming efforts.

Another weak point is that we need ***more systematic gender mainstreaming of our activities*** (especially publications and meetings). However, there is an increasing awareness among staff of the gender mainstreaming commitment and the need to train the working groups on gender mainstreaming,

Another weak point is the need for ***more knowledge and skills in how practically to go about doing gender mainstreaming among staff and working group members***. Despite the fact that staff as well as gender working group members have been trained in gender mainstreaming, they do not feel confident enough and well enough equipped to take the responsibility for the gender mainstreaming themselves.

And this leads to the last point of weakness, the *need for more human resources* as the main expertise on gender mainstreaming are few and very busy.

THE PRINCIPLE CHALLENGES AND WAYS TO OVERCOME THEM

The principle challenges to advancing gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN is how to communicate the commitment to gender mainstreaming and the gender mainstreaming strategy to our members – ***and convince the EMHRN members of the advantages of adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in their own work.***

Another challenge is to ***institutionalise gender mainstreaming of all our activities.***

Ways to overcome these challenges has to do with more training on gender mainstreaming and the benefits that this approach gives to organisations in terms of efficient running of the organisations. The GWG needs to see how it can reinforce its capacity to provide training – without turning itself into a pure training institution. The EMHRN need to see how it can support the GWG with both human and financial resources – and how it can support its members in their gender mainstreaming efforts.

In relation to institutionalising gender mainstreaming in all our activities, we need to see how we can reinforce the capacities of the EMHRN staff as well as the working group in gender mainstreaming. This could happen by having yearly workshops on gender mainstreaming for staff as well as having gender mainstreaming training for all working groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO ADVANCE THE GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORK OF THE EMHRN

While we can not do everything at the same time, I think it makes sense to reinforce some of the strong points (in order not to risk any setbacks) as well as to focus on one of two of our weak points. We would suggest the following:

- To reinforce the gender mainstreaming awareness by providing training on gender mainstreaming for the new Executive Committee as well as for all the new WGs
- To distribute the GMRK to all EMHRN members with a letter stating the benefits of adopting a gender mainstreaming strategy and support members efforts in gender mainstreaming
- To draft the EMHRN gender mainstreaming strategy and distribute it to EMHRN members
- To ensure the systemized gender mainstreaming of all EMHRN reports