

## **EMHRN Executive Committee Meeting Copenhagen, September 28-30, 2012**

*Minutes – approved*

The Executive Committee (EC) of the EMHRN held its first meeting after the 2012 General Assembly in Copenhagen on 28-30 September 2012. Discussions focused on the presentation to the EC of the Network, its functioning and its Secretariat; the assessment of the June 2012 General Assembly and the 2012-2018 Strategy; the role and responsibilities of the EC members, as well as on the membership applications to the Network. Finally, the EC appointed the vice-president of the Network as well as the political referents of the various working groups and other themes.

### **PARTICIPANTS**

#### Executive Committee (EC) of the EMHRN:

Michel Tubiana (President), Moataz El Fegiery (Treasurer), Alya Chérif Chamhari, Anitta Kynsilehto Ayachi Hammami, Eugenia Papamakariou, Isaías Barreñada, Nassera Dutour, Raffaella Bolini et Søs Nissen (EC members).

#### Honorary members of the EMHRN:

Lone Lindholt

#### Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director), Fabrice Liebaut (Human Resources and Fundraising), Marit Flø Jørgensen (Program Director) and Caroline Rey (Executive Secretary, Rapporteur).

#### Absent:

Mahmoud AbuRahma and Osman Isci (EC members) – excused (see under point 1)

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome
2. Presentation and discussion on the organisation of the EMHRN
3. Round table on recent political developments in the region
4. Report of the Secretariat
5. Assessment of the General Assembly
6. Discussion on the Strategy in the light of the GA discussions
7. Restructuring of the EMHRN
8. Working program and financial report of the Secretariat
9. Composition of the working groups
10. Role and responsibilities of the EC members and agreement on the EC work method
11. Team work: SWOT analysis of the EC
12. Presentation of the results of the SWOT analysis
13. Composition of the Executive Committee
14. Members of the EMHRN and membership applications
15. Policy on the safety of staff members when they are travelling
16. Discussion on the issues to be addressed in the press release
17. Miscellaneous



## 1. Welcome

*Moderators: Michel Tubiana & Lone Lindholt*

Michel Tubiana opened the session by welcoming the EC members to their first meeting and regretting the absence of Osman Isci jailed in Turkey for alleged terrorist involvement, and of Mahmoud AbuRahma whose visa request to enter Denmark was processed too late.

Former EC member and honorary member of the EMHRN Lone Lindholt then invited the members to introduce themselves to the Committee.

### *Isaías Barreñada*

Founding member of ACSUR 25 years ago, he began his solidarity activism in Central America. His activist career has taken place in the framework of ACSUR and the world of trade unionism. He is now a university teacher on issues related to citizenship and the Middle East, in particular Palestine.

### *Eugenia Papamakariou*

Secretary General of EDDAA and founding member, she has been a solidarity activist since 1997. She has devoted her life to solidarity action.

### *Moataz El Fegiery*

He has been involved in human rights work since 2001 through his work with the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. He is now writing a PhD in the United Kingdom. A member of the EMHRN Executive Committee since 2006, he has increased his experience on human rights issues through his involvement with the Network.

### *Søs Nissen*

Solidarity activist since the age of 14, she joined the Palestinian solidarity movement in the aftermath of the Intifada. In Denmark, her strong commitment to this cause has earned her the nickname of Mrs Palestine.

### *Nassera Dutour*

She is the spokesperson for the Collective for the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria, an association she founded in 1997 after the disappearance of her son. She eventually moved to France where she has worked in the retail business while being involved with the Human Rights League (LDH) and Amnesty International.

### *Anitta Kynsilehto*

An activist since the 1990s, she is associate researcher at the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI). Her involvement with the EMHRN has focused on migration issues.

### *Ayachi Hammami*

A lawyer in Tunis defending human rights, he worked under difficult circumstances under the Ben Ali regime and welcomes the steadfast support that the EMHRN gave him during those years. He has also been a member of the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH) since the 1980s.

### *Raffaella Bolini*

A member of the ARCI national council, as a life-long activist she has been involved with a number of movements (peace groups, Israel-Palestine solidarity groups, anti-racist groups, Balkan conflicts solidarity).

### *Alya Chérif Chammari*

A lawyer at the Court of Cassation in Tunisia and registered as lawyer to the Criminal Court, she has been a human rights –and in particular women’s rights- defender since the 1980’s. -, She is a

founding member and Executive Director of Collectif 95 –Maghreb Égalité, a regional Maghreb association created in 1992, and founding member of the EMHRN in 1997.

*Michel Tubiana*

Former president of the Human Rights League (LDH), he has been a Human Rights activist for many years. Born in Algeria and bearing French nationality, he belongs to the two shores of the Mediterranean, each one having much to learn from the other as he likes to say. For him, the Network has a role to play in bridging two different cultures and outlooks, and facilitate their converging toward non-negotiable common principles.

#### Decisions

- The agenda of the meeting was adopted.

#### Documents

##### 1.1. Agenda (*for adoption*)

## **2. Presentation and discussion on the organisation of the EMHRN**

*Moderator: Moataz El Fegjery*

Marc Schade-Poulsen went back on the history of the EMHRN and recalled that the Network was created by NGOs following the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995. The Secretariat was established in Denmark because of the neutral stance at that time of the country in the EuroMed region, the great importance that it was giving to human rights issues and the support of the Danish government for the Network's establishment. Originally, the idea was that the EMHRN would act as a unifier and a facilitator of a horizontal network of human rights organisations in the region. Very soon, the Network was regrouping a large number of organisations, with approximately 40 members at the time of its first general assembly.

The structure of the EMHRN is the following:

- General Assembly: decision-making body; composed of the regular, associate and honorary members.
- Executive Committee: political body; supervises the Secretariat
- Quartet: strengthens and facilitates relations between the EC and the Secretariat
- Working groups: sub-structure that is closer to the member; no decision-making power; WG members are identified through a call for participation
- Solidarity groups: focus on specific countries; members are coopted
- Secretariat: see document 2.3 *Organisation Chart of the EMHRN*; currently 24 staff members.

To complete the presentation of the Network, Marit Flø Jørgensen presented the EMHRN Gender Equality Policy Paper included as an annex to the 2012-2018 Strategy. She recalled that women's rights have always been a priority of the Network and that a gender mainstreaming policy was adopted in 2004. A gender audit was carried out this year to assess the implementation of the policy.

#### Documents

2.1. EMHRN Statutes (*for information*)

2.2. EMHRN By Laws (*for information*)

2.3. Organisation chart of the EMHRN (*for information*)

### **3. Round table on recent political developments in the region**

*Moderator: Søs Nissen*

The EC members shared their perspectives on the recent political developments in the region. The following points were highlighted:

A new era bringing new opportunities has opened and this causes the EMHRN to revise its thinking. Before, Europe was prosperous and the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean were living under authoritarian regimes and there was no way out in sight. Today, Europe is going through an unprecedented crisis at the institutional, economic and social levels and is following an incoherent course while a revolutionary process is unfolding in the South. Now pluralism and free expression is possible and the Network must do more than just condemn, it must also accompany and support the on-going societal debate.

Until now, the Network's concerns essentially focused on southern shores of the Mediterranean. Now, and leaving aside any comparison of the European democracies with those of the South, there is no escaping the fact that there are also problems in Europe as shown for example by the social revolt in Portugal, the advent of an authoritarian regime in Hungary, the crisis in Greece or the unprecedented expeditious expulsion of Moroccan migrants by the Spanish military. In a context of major political changes, it becomes necessary to give greater attention to social justice and economic and social rights.

Furthermore, a xenophobic and Islamophobic groundswell is sweeping through Europe where there is more uninhibited talk about the Muslim world, not only concerning the immigrants but also those who have become European citizens. The Network must address that issue while reflecting on how to slow the rise of Islamic radicalism. On that matter, in order to remain credible, the EMHRN must adopt the same approach in the face of the governing Islamists as it had at the time when authoritarian regimes were in place.

Faced with the paradox between, on one hand, the rise of the Islamists and, on the other, the strengthening of human rights values, the civil society's action and reaction is disorganized. The Network must work to instil greater coherence and efficiency within the ranks of the civil society.

In the current situation, the European Union does not have the necessary means to act efficiently. It does take some initiatives but it does not give itself the means to make progress, as shown by its recently adopted 36-point strategy on human rights. One must therefore distinguish the EU from its member states, some of which should be the target of the Network's attention.

### **4. Report of the Secretariat**

*Moderator: Alya Cherif Chammari*

Completing the information contained in document *4.1 Summary of News Exchange no. 61-62*, Marc Schade-Poulsen emphasized the following points:

- Freedom of association: The main concerns that must draw our attention are Egypt and Algeria. Work on freedom of assembly has started and the terms of reference of the report on that issue are being discussed.
- Justice: The project is on a standstill until it is decided what topics should be focused on.
- Gender: The project is active. However the initial intent to link it to the Marrakech-Istanbul process did not go through. Now it must be decided how to be operational while bringing added value.

- PIP: The main topic is the meeting of the EU-Israel association council and the decision of the EU to implement the current bilateral action plan and cooperate with Israel despite that country's violations of the human rights of the Palestinians.
- Migrants and refugees: A mission was sent to Libya. A seminar could be organized in Benghazi before the end of the year. The project should also focus on the modification of the Frontex regulation.
- Communication: The new Web site is expected to be launched at the end of October.

#### Documents

4.1. Summary of News Exchange no. 61-62 (*for information*)

### **5. Assessment of the General Assembly**

*Moderator: Eugenia Papamakariou*

The EC members praised the organisation of the General Assembly. They welcomed the fact that the great majority of the members of the Network attended the event and that there were many more candidates to the EC elections than at the last GA, thus strengthening the democratic character of the EMHRN. Before the next GA, we will need to think about improved and more interactive meeting formats in order of increase the participants' involvement.

### **6. Discussion on the strategy in the light of the discussions of the General Assembly**

*Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto*

After briefly reviewing the Strategy (see 6.1 Strategy 2012-2018), Marc Schade-Poulsen highlighted the following main points that were put forth during the GA and that are contained in document 6.2 Report of the GA, including the recommendations on the Strategy:

- spreading the human rights culture;
- key role of women's rights;
- importance of economic and social rights;
- the need for generation renewal within the human rights movement.

Isaías Barreñada pointed out that, in the Strategy, lobbying action is mostly focusing on the EU, its members and its EuroMed-oriented structures and he suggested that it should also focus on regional or bi-regional Arab institutions. Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that the former EC had discussed the issue and decided to favour an approach more centred on the United Nations, but that the issue was not closed and was still open to discussion.

After having discussed the recommendations made during the GA, the EC adopted the 2012-2018 Strategy in its current version along with the recommendations contained in GA report.

#### Decisions

- The 2012-2018 Strategy was adopted in its current version.
- The recommendations on the Strategy contained in the report of the 2012 GA were adopted as a work document.

#### Documents

6.1. 2012-2018 Strategy (*for information*)

6.2. Report of the GA, including the recommendations on the Strategy (*for adoption*)

## 7. Restructuring of the EMHRN

*Moderator: Nassera Dutour*

Marc Schade-Poulsen pointed out that the thinking process on the restructuring of the EMHRN had been going on for several years. Early 2012, a consultant was called in to bring an outside perspective (see document 7.1. *Report on the organisational structure of the EMHRN, by Peter Marinus Jensen*). Afterward, the former EC agreed on the main points of the restructuring.

The general intent behind the new structure shown in the long-term organisation chart (see 7.2 *New Organisation Chart*) is to give the management more leeway to coordinate and strategize activities, to improve internal and external communication and to strengthen team work.

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the main new features of the structure described as “ideal” (in the long term):

- Reduction in the number of offices and expansion of the remaining ones.
  - o The HQ will remain in Copenhagen
  - o The office in Brussels will be expanded and will host, among others, the directors in charge of advocacy, the programs and communication. The main activities related to programming will be carried out from Brussels
  - o One office in the Mashreq (location to be determined)
  - o One office in the Maghreb (Tunis)
- Setting up teams
  - o Goal: to ensure greater continuity
  - o Appointment of team leaders to facilitate communication
  - o The thematic blocs on which the teams will be structured still have to be determined
- Mainstreaming of administration: An administrative staff team will be put in place.
- Advocacy: Three new posts will be created (Maghreb and Mashreq advocacy and thematic advocacy).
- A fundraiser position will be created.
- Capacity building: To be determined. The idea would be to assign one person to the Network members’ service who would be tasked to identify their needs.

The EC members then expressed their viewpoints on the new structure.

Moataz El Fegjery had concerns about the financial consequences of the restructuring and doubted the Network would have the resources to support such a broad structure.

Michel Tubiana added that the objective of the new system is to streamline the Network’s activities. That said, the implementation of the new structure will have to give meaningful results on the communication front. If communication from the Brussels office were to show no improvement, we may have to consider establishing a communication office in Paris, and even London. On that last point, Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that a new communication strategy was being worked on and that a report by an external consultant should be available at the next EC meeting.

Other EC members expressed reservations on the expected synergies between Europe and the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean. A number of themes are just as relevant for the north as they are for the south and to assign them to a Mashreq or a Maghreb office may unduly limit their scope and impact.

Finally, Lone Lindholt pointed out that the new structure will have a centrifugal effect, going from the centre to the outside, while the EMHRN needs also to be centred on its member (centripetal model).

That said, the EC members were of the opinion that the elements presented were a move in the right direction and it approved the forthcoming restructuring.

#### Decisions

- The long-term restructuring project was adopted.
- The communication strategy will be put on the agenda of the next EC meeting.

#### Documents

- 7.1. Report on the organisational structure of the EMHRN, by Peter Marinus Jensen (for information)
- 7.2. New organisation chart (for discussion)

### **8. Work program and financial report of the Secretariat**

*Moderator: Ayachi Hammami*

#### *Work Program*

Marit Flø Jørgensen presented the work program for 2012-2014 (see document *8.1 Work Program 2012* and *8.2 Expected results*). She also gave the following clarifications in reply to questions by EC members:

- There is not much time left for organising a second mission to Libya before the end of the year, but any mission must take place before the end of the financial contract and it is also important to go back to that country soon.
- The strategy on Syria is under review. Focus needs to be on documentation training and transitional justice.
- Freedom of expression is not among the areas of work of the EMHRN since that field is already well covered by other organisations and therefore the Network would not bring any added value in that field.

#### *Financial report*

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented document *8.4 Budget & activity results 2012* linked to the work program. He explained that the document contained the budget, expenses and their breakdown (in percentage). The expenses linked to activities correspond on the whole to the per diem, hotel and transportation, as well as to the reports. Salaries refer to the staffs that carry out the activities.

Marc Schade-Poulsen then presented the document *8.3. Budget 2012-2013* and gave an overview of the projects. Among other things, the budget shows that 70% of the Network's funds come from DANIDA, SIDA and the EU.

Some members suggested that the possibility of obtaining financial support from Norway be explored.

The EC approved the 2012-2013 budget and the 2012 budget by activity.

#### Decisions

- The 2012-2013 budget and the 2012 budget by activity were approved.

## Documents

- 8.1. Work plan 2012 (*for adoption*)
- 8.2. Achievement document (*for information*)
- 8.3. 2012-2013 budget (*for adoption*)
- 8.4. Budget & Results for 2012 activities (*for adoption*)

## **9. Composition of the working groups**

*Moderator: Isaías Barreñada*

Marit Flø Jørgensen summed up the role of the working groups and suggested that they should focus more on policy development and knowledge sharing so as to become forums of experts. The working groups will be covering the following themes: Justice; Freedom of Association (including freedom of assembly and freedom of movement); Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; Gender; Palestine, Israel and Palestinians (PIP).

Marit Flø Jørgensen also pointed out that a call for participation was sent to all the members on July 5, 2012 and it was mentioned that all applications should be submitted by September 1. There was then a pre-selection of files based on general criteria (experience, contribution, network) and more specific criteria (geographical, gender, age, language and national diversity), with a limit of two members per country.

The pre-selection lists were then distributed to the EC members, who were invited to comment on them as well as suggest any potential resource persons to Flø Jørgensen within 8 days. The political referents of the working groups concerned will then be consulted, after which Moataz El Fegier, Michel Tubiana, Marc Schade-Poulsen and Marit Flø Jørgensen (mandated by the EC) will take the final decision on the composition of the groups.

## Decisions

- The EC members will send in their comment on the pre-selection lists regarding membership in the working groups to Marit Flø Jørgensen before October 7, 2012.
- The political referents will be consulted on their working groups.
- The EC mandated Moataz El Fegier, Michel Tubiana, Marc Schade-Poulsen and Marit Flø Jørgensen to take the final decision on the composition of the groups.

## **10. Role and responsibilities of EC members and agreement on the EC work method**

*Moderator: Lone Lindholt*

### *Responsibilities of the EC*

Marc Schade-Poulsen explained what were the responsibilities of the EC according to Danish law (see document 10.1 *Responsibilities of the EC*). Michel Tubiana then invited the EC members to refer to the Statutes and By Laws of the EMHRN for additional details on the financial responsibilities of the Executive Director, the President and the Treasurer.

In general terms, it is expected of EC members that they should make themselves available: to be present and active participants at meetings, to do some work between meetings, timely reply to email, participate in the activities of the EMHRN. Furthermore, EC members do not represent their organisation but rather work for the best interests of the Network. As political referents, they will be consulted by the coordinators that they are expected to support with their experience and knowledge or at least they will refer them to other resources that can answer their questions.



### *Work method*

Michel Tubiana recalled that the approval procedure for press releases by the EC is already in place (it was sent by email to the EC members soon after their election). He also invited the EC members to make sure to read the News Exchanges of the EMHRN (available in English and in French and emailed to all EC members approximately every 6 weeks) since they are an important source of information on the on-going activities of the Network.

The members discussed on the work method and the communication tools to be adopted. Some suggested holding short ad hoc meetings on Skype with EC members that would be both interested and available. They would focus on themes that are particularly important or relevant at a given moment. Others raised the possibility for the EC members to share articles in a Dropbox that each could read at their convenience. Finally, some stressed the critical importance of the EC mailing list, emails being the most efficient mean of communication in a timely fashion.

### Decisions

- Ayachi Hammami will undertake a consultation round and will present his results and observations in a note on communication within the EC (means available, methods) that will be discussed at the next EC meeting.

### Documents

- 10.1. Responsibilities of the EC (*for information*)

## **11. Team work: SWOT analysis of the EC**

*Moderator: Lone Lindholt*

Lone Lindholt invited the EC members to take part in a SWOT analysis in order to learn about their strong and weak points, as well as about the threats and opportunities.

## **12. Presentation of the results of the SWOT analysis**

*Moderator: Lone Lindholt*

The results of the SWOT analysis were presented.

## **13. Composition of the Executive Committee**

*Moderator: Michel Tubiana*

In accordance with the statutes of the EMHRN, since the president of the Network is a man from an organisation based in the EU, the vice-president must be a woman from an organisation based in a Mediterranean partner country of the EU. Nassera Dutour was appointed Vice President.

The political referents as well as their alternates were also selected. It was agreed that the alternates would not enjoy decision-making power regarding the theme/working group that they assist, but that they would share their expertise with the coordinators. Therefore, they will be systematically consulted in the same way the political referents are.

The following political referents (and alternates) have been selected:

### *Existing working group:*

- Justice: Ayachi Hammami

- Freedom of association: Nassera Dutour (Osman Isci)
- PIP: Mahmoud AbuRahma
- Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers: Anitta Kynsilehto
- Gender: Alya Cherif Chammari

*Working groups to be set up:*

- Economic and social rights: Isaiás Barreñada (*Raffaella Bolini*)
- Discrimination and freedom of conscience: Eugenia Papamakariou
- Mashreq: Moataz El Fegiery (*Mahmoud AbuRahma*)
- Maghreb: Isaiás Barreñada (*Ayachi Hammami*)
- Europe: Raffaella Bolini
- Advocacy: Søs Nissen (*Moataz El Fegiery*)

*Communication:* Quartet

*Training:* Quartet

*Search for new members:* Quartet + political referents Maghreb, Mashreq and Europe

Then, the EC members discussed the situation of Osman Isci held in prison in Ankara, and they sent him a letter of support. The EC will keep contact with Osman Isci by keeping sending him books and writing him letters and by holding their next meeting in Turkey. Furthermore, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the members that a support campaign would be launched on the Network's website very soon.

Decisions

- Nassera Dutour was named Vice-President of the EMHRN.
- Political referents and alternates were selected: see list above.
- The next EC meeting will be held in Turkey if possible, and preferably in Ankara, in support for Osman Isci.

**14. Members of the EMHRN and membership applications**

*Moderator: Michel Tubiana*

Michel Tubiana recalled to the EC members that in assessing the applications, the overview of the Network's membership (see document *14.1 Membership overview*) and the following criteria should be taken into consideration: North/South distribution; thematic diversity; members per country; maximum number of Network members.

The EC members discussed on the procedure concerning members that are either inactive or which distinctive value might be considered lacking in the Network. Michel Tubiana will present at the next EC meeting a report on the stakes and financial consequences involved in an increase membership beyond the current 4-member limit per country. He added that the next GA should reflect upon possible amendments to the statutes in order to allow the EC to admit or exclude members.

Regarding the search for new members, the EC was of the opinion that it should be more proactive, and some members have mentioned Mauritania and the Balkans as regions that might be targeted.

The EC members then considered the membership applications that were presented to them.

Decisions

- Michel Tubiana will present a report on the stakes and financial consequences of increased membership at the next EC meeting.

- The applications of New Woman Foundation, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Swasiya (regular members) and International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (associate member) were approved by the EC. The Secretariat will inform the organisations concerned as soon as possible.
- The EC took note of the withdrawal from the Network of Penal Reform International, associate member, and of John Rud, honorary member.

#### Documents

- 14.1. Membership overview (*for information*)
- 14.2. Membership application overview (*for discussion*)
- 14.3. Current membership applications (*for adoption*)

### **15. Staff travel security policy**

*Moderator: Eugenia Papamakariou*

The EC pondered over the main points of the document *15.1 Staff travel security policy* and discussed on the issue of sending staff members on missions abroad, particularly in countries considered to be at risk.

#### Documents

- 15.1. Staff travel security policy (*for information*)

### **16. Discussion on the issues to be addressed in the press release**

*Moderator: Michel Tubiana*

The EC members agreed that the following elements be included in the press release that will be published after their meeting:

- The EC had its first meeting in Copenhagen on 28-30 September;
- Election of a vice-president;
- Composition of the EC;
- Press release on Syria.

A press release on Osman Isci will be published separately.

### **17. Miscellaneous**

*Moderator: Michel Tubiana*

The EC members agreed on the following dates and venues for their meetings in 2013:

- 15-17 February 2013, in Turkey if possible, and preferably in Ankara  
Meeting to be accompanied with media coverage to show the support of the EC for Osman Isci.  
Søs Nissen informed that she would be unable to attend the meeting.
- 14-16 June 2013, location to be determined at the February meeting.
- 18-20 October 2013, location to be determined at a later date.

In addition, the Quartet will meet in Copenhagen on 17 December 2012.

Decisions

- EC meetings: 15-17 February, Ankara (if possible); 14-16 June and 18-20 October 2013.
- Quartet meeting: 17 December 2012, Copenhagen