



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

2nd Gender Audit of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMRHN) is to promote and strengthen human rights and democratic reforms in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The promotion of gender equality and women's participation is central to such efforts, since women's rights are an integral part of human rights, and there is no democracy, when half of the population cannot enjoy its rights.

To promote gender equality, the EMHRN has adopted a dual strategy of 1) gender mainstreaming combined with 2) targeted actions for gender equality to ensure that women and men benefit equally in the structures and activities of the network, and that EMHRN contributes to the promotion of gender equality in the Euro-Mediterranean region (EMHRN Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit, p. 20).

Both start from the observation that men and women often play different roles and have different experiences, points of view, needs, interests and access to power. While the latter entails projects and activities targeting and empowering women as a specific group, the former focuses on analysing and targeting the differences between men and women as well as the relation between them as an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes. Gender mainstreaming does not mean that specific interventions seeking to support, strengthen and empower women as a group are no longer necessary. Rather, it means that gender equality should also be promoted systematically by everyone, in all activities and structures, at all levels, at all stages and by the actors normally involved in those processes. To be successful, those actors must have gender competence, i.e. be able to recognise gender perspectives in their work and policy fields and concentrate on them towards the goal of gender equality¹.

Gender mainstreaming ensures that men and women enjoy their 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 visible in the mainstream struggle for human rights
- It takes diversity into account within the organization

¹The definition of gender competence cited above is taken from the GenderKompetenzZentrum: <http://www.genderkompetenz.info/eng/gender-competence-2003-2010/gendercompetence>. Gender competence consists of three elements: intention/motivation, knowledge and ability. Moreover, gender competence is gained through gender mainstreaming in so far as conducting a gendered analysis of a subject driven by *motivation/intention* to mainstream gender entails the production of new *knowledge* and thus increased *ability* to incorporate it into the programmes.

The EMHRN started its efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming of its structures and activities in 2004. In 2008 these efforts were assessed through a comprehensive gender audit, which reviewed the gender equality situation in the policies, structures and practice of the network and made recommendations on how to further strengthen gender mainstreaming within the network. It found several strong points, namely a strong political will, a stated commitment to gender equality as well as expertise and structures to support gender mainstreaming. Moreover, it found an increasing awareness among staff of the gender mainstreaming commitment. One weak point was that many member organisations had not adopted a gender mainstreaming approach and that the network had not been yet successful in communicating its commitment to gender mainstreaming to them and engage them in gender mainstreaming efforts. The EMHRN gender policy needed to be clearly formulated and disseminated to all EMHRN members, the gender mainstreaming approach had to be applied more systematically into EMHRN publications and meetings, and there was a need to train the working groups in gender mainstreaming.

The findings and recommendations of the gender audit were dealt with as a specific point on the agenda, when the newly elected Executive Committee assembled for the first time in February 2009. It unanimously adopted the gender audit and decided that four measures should be taken in order to advance the gender mainstreaming work of the EMHRN in the years to come: Firstly, a policy paper should be produced outlining the EMHRN commitment to gender mainstreaming. Secondly, the Gender Mainstreaming Reference Kit should be distributed to members along with an offer of providing training and best practice recommendations. Thirdly, training on gender mainstreaming should be provided to the EC and the working groups. And finally, EMHRN efforts in relation to gender mainstreaming of reports should be continued and systematized.

More than three years have passed since then. In the meantime the Executive Committee has adopted the EMHRN Policy Paper on Gender Equality and a work plan for the Gender Working Group (GWG), which defines activities to ensure implementation of the policy with one such area being the institutionalization of gender equality and the enhancement of gender mainstreaming in EMHRN structures and activities. With a new EC being elected at the General Assembly in June 2012, the time is now ripe for a new gender audit to assess what progress has been made since 2008 and to suggest measures to ensure that gender equality and women's rights are mainstreamed into structures and activities of the EMHRN and its member organisations.

The overall objectives and purpose

The purpose of this gender audit is to shed light on the commitments of the EMHRN with regard to gender equality, women's rights and gender mainstreaming, to assess how they have been implemented and recommend next steps to be taken in order to support the process of Institutionalising Gender Equality (IGE) in the EMHRN including gender-balanced structures and gender mainstreaming of EMHRN activities.

The immediate objectives are to:

- 1) Highlight the commitments made by the EMHRN regarding gender equality
- 2) Clarify gaps within the EMHRN with regard to meeting these commitments
- 3) Identify strong and weak points in relation to EMHRN gender mainstreaming efforts

- 4) Point to key obstacles and ways to overcome them; and finally
- 5) Recommend measures aimed at advancing the IGE including the strengthening of gender mainstreaming work of EMHRN and its members

The strategic vision of the EMHRN: Institutionalising Gender Equality (IGE)

EMHRN efforts to promote gender equality are based on an understanding of gender inequality as linked to the EMHRN as an institution² in which processes take place deciding how resources are allocated, and who takes part in the decision-making process. Gender inequality is thus a result of the way the network is structured and functions. While most institutions and organisations believe that their modus operandi is neutral, that their impact on men and women is the same, this is rarely the case. Thus, if the EMHRN allocates more resources to the prevention of human rights violations typically experienced by men than to those experiences by women, and if more men than women are involved in decision-making processes at the GA or in the EC, this is linked to the structures and the functioning of the network itself.³ To ensure that the network gives and promotes equal access to resources, rights and opportunities for men and women, gender equality must be institutionalised, i.e. the institution must be transformed in such a way that gender equality is an integral part of the EMHRN structures and activities determining such access. Efforts aimed at increasing the contribution of the EMHRN to gender equality must therefore aim at Institutionalising Gender Equality (IGE).⁴ The institutionalisation process can be supported through engaging in advocacy for gender equality, raising awareness and increasing knowledge, incorporating the gender equality dimension into strategies and programmes, strengthening women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies; and making organisational tools, task and procedures more attuned to the gender dimension.

Methodology

The methodology of this gender audit is based on a strategic vision of IGE and has been established following consultation with the EMHRN executive committee, the EMHRN Gender Working Group (GWG), the program director and the director of the gender project. It focuses exclusively on IGE within the EMHRN and is carried out as a desk study supplemented with interviews with staff in order to verify the findings and to ensure that the recommendations are relevant and operational.

² An institution is defined as a system governed by certain rules and norms, where certain people holding different power vis-à-vis one another engage in certain activities for which a certain amount of resources are allocated. And all of these factors are determinant in the allocation of resources (time spent talking about it at meetings, visibility, advocacy, money) and the extent to which gender equality is promoted by the institution/organisation.

³ Institutions do not exist or operate in isolation and what goes on in one institution is dependent on what takes place in other institutions. E.g. efforts aimed at increasing the number of women involved in decision-making in parliamentary assemblies and the level of influence of these women cannot be dealt with or assessed in isolation from the rules, norms, culture and power relations governing society as a whole. In turn, seeing women behave in a “culturally inappropriate” manner during parliamentary sittings, as bloggers or taking part in demonstrations could also end up changing the perception of “appropriate” behaviour for women in the family, the marketplace or society in general. Thus, changes in one institution can enable or hamper change in another institution, but unless efforts are made to change the institution as such, resource allocation and participation in the decision-making process will not change, and the goals of gender equality and equity will not be achieved.

⁴ The success of such efforts depend on a variety of factors, e.g. political will at the highest level; commitment and dedication, including at the individual level; policies specifically geared towards gender equality, as well as laws based on the principle of equality; the involvement of women in decision-making processes; and partnerships with and involvement of NGOs that promote women's interests (rights) among others.

It looks at IGE on five levels:

- The Ethical & Political level
- Technical/Expertise
- Strategies, Programmes and Activities
- Organisational Structures and Culture
- Women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies

In relation to the ethical & political level, the audit will assess a) the commitments expressed in values, vision, and mission in various basic texts; b) the support and leadership of top managers; and c) the awareness of the gender issue throughout the organisation. This is done by reviewing the statutes, by-laws, the EMHRN Policy Paper on Gender Equality and by interviewing and observing EMHRN staff.

In relation to the technical/expertise level the audit will examine to what extent gender is integrated into a) Planning (Overall work plan 2010-2011, Core funding application, selected project applications); b) Monitoring and assessments (Activity reports and annual reports, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011). Moreover, it will examine, if knowledge of gender issues and gender mainstreaming expertise is available and if the EMHRN has established mechanisms enabling the incorporation of this knowledge and expertise in the structures and activities of the EMHRN.

In relation to strategies, programmes and activities the audit will look at the extent to which gender equality was effectively recognized and reflected in the EMHRN strategies (EMHRN Strategy 2006-2011, Draft EMHRN Strategy 2012-2018), working tools (WG ToR), programmes and activities (WG meetings⁵). Specifically, the audit will look at gender balance in WGs and if gender equality had been on the agenda of WG meetings during the last three years (2009-2012).

In relation to organisational structures and culture the audit will review to what extent administrative tasks and procedures and human resource management take account of gender. In relation to culture, the gender audit will review the documents defining the working environment of EMHRN staff to assess if there is a corporate culture that respects gender parity, equal representation at all decision levels, equal opportunity, and equal distribution of resources for women and men.

In relation to women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies the audit will review to what extent the EMHRN is ensuring and strengthening women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies. The audit will assess the degree of gender balance in the EMHRN executive bodies, working groups and staff by looking at gender disaggregated statistics for the General Assembly (Barcelona 2008, Copenhagen 2012); the Executive Committee(2009-2012); the EMHRN secretariat (current, 2012); and the EMHRN working groups (current, 2012). In addition, the audit will look at the percentage of women's rights organizations currently members of the EMHRN.⁶

⁵ It would be crucial to assess the incorporation of gender into other activities of the EMHRN (reports, missions, seminars etc.) as well, but this is beyond the scope of this gender audit.

⁶ Gender disaggregated data on gender balance and counting the number of women's rights organisations serve as proxy variables in this regard, as assessing the extent to which women's involvement and empowerment has been strengthened would require the collection of qualitative data, which are beyond the scope of this gender audit.

2. IGE IN THE EMHRN

2.1 IGE at the ethical & political level

2.1.1 EMHRN commitments to gender equality, women's rights and gender mainstreaming

The EMHRN statutes were adopted at the 2003 General Assembly (GA) in Malta and amended by the 2008 GA in Barcelona, whereas the bylaws were adopted by the EC in 2009. The statutes express that the EMHRN is committed to supporting the promotion of equality between men and women as a part of its work to support the development of democratic institutions and the promotion of the rule of law. Elaborating even further on what this entails, they go on stating that “*The EMHRN fights against ... all discrimination based on origin, gender, family situation, pregnancy, physical appearance, family name, state of health, disability, genetic characteristics, sexual orientation...*” (EMHRN statutes, p. 3). This sentence was added by the 2008 GA.

The commitment of the EMHRN to *the principles of gender balance in the decision-making structures of the network and equal opportunities are iterated several times* in both the statutes and the bylaws. Gender balance must be strived for/ensured in relation to the representation of regular members and associate members at the GA; appointing member representatives to chair the sessions at the GA; electing the Executive Committee and its steering group as well as in relation to the presidency. Moreover, to promote gender balance in the EC, the bylaws stipulate that in case of a tie vote between a male and a female candidate, the winner is the female candidate, and the President and the Vice President cannot be of the same sex. In relation to equal opportunities it is stipulated that the EC must make sure that in all cases and by any means male and female members of the EC benefit, so far as possible, from the same opportunities and in relation to staff it is stipulated that the provisions and internal procedures should emphasize a commitment to create and reinforce a working environment and a corporate culture within the EMHRN 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.

The Policy Paper on Gender Equality adopted by the EC in the autumn of 2010 defines gender mainstreaming as a means of achieving gender equality in the region and defines a set of objectives in this regard, and the accompanying work plan defines several activities aimed at advancing such efforts. Although the degree of IGE at the ethical and political was relatively high even before adoption of the policy paper and work plan took it to a new level by linking the gender equality agenda of the network to specific human rights conventions and specifying further what gender mainstreaming entails. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, it places the responsibility for the adoption, distribution and implementation of the Policy Paper with the Quartet and the Executive Committee and the responsibility for follow up with the Political Referent on Gender. Whereas one could argue that this was also the case before the adoption of the policy paper, the fact that responsibility is now placed *explicitly rather than implicitly* with the EC and the Political Referent on Gender, thus making someone accountable for a lack of implementation, is a very important step towards deepening the degree of IGE in the EMHRN.

Few commitments, however, are made to *ensuring that gender competence is available*. One is made in that the political referent for gender is compulsory member of the steering group of the EC. Another is

that the secretariat must include “*an assessment of gender parity respect throughout the activities*” in the file that it prepares for the scrutiny of the EC of the candidacy of a new member. One could argue that with a policy paper stating specific objectives in relation to gender mainstreaming, there is an implicit assumption that gender competence is available. One could also argue that gender competence goes hand in hand with gender balance. This, however, cannot be assumed. Although individuals engaged in the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality tend to be female rather than male, all women cannot be assumed to be engaged with such issues. Moreover, although the motivation/intention is there, it cannot be assumed that such individuals possess the knowledge of such issues in relation to the specific area or have the skills necessary to integrate this knowledge into the specific discussion or programme.

2.1.2 Support and leadership of top managers in relation to gender equality

Gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women’s rights has been discussed in some way at all EC meetings held from 2009 to 2012, and managers have taken leadership and supported the process of making EMHRN commitments to gender equality a reality. Two events seem to have been pivotal in this regard: Firstly, the decision of the EC to follow the recommendation of the 2008 Gender Audit to develop a Gender Policy. Secondly, the process of developing a new network strategy. Both events have stimulated discussions at EC level on not only the extent to which the gender mainstreaming approach should be applied and with what implications, but also about the mandate/role of the GWG in realising the EMHRN commitment to gender mainstreaming. The outcome of these discussions were the adoption of a gender policy and work plan as well as a decision allowing the GWG to comment on the strategy as the only WG in order to ensure gender mainstreaming of the new strategy.

In addition, gender mainstreaming was mentioned during discussions revolving around the development of a new organisational structure as well as in the assessment of a membership application from an organisation working on the rights of prisoners during which the members of EC agreed that the network needed organizations focusing on women rights more than on prisoners’ rights. Another meeting dealt with how to realise the commitment of having a gender balanced GA. Contributions to the discussions described above were made not only by members of the EC, but also by the Executive Director, the Program Director, the Advocacy Director and the Director of the Gender Project. EMHRN management has been aware of the need to ensure that qualified female candidates would run for EC at the 2012 GA and has allocated resources for a second Gender Audit.

Some limitations have also been identified. E.g. when during the discussion of the work plan, a suggestion that outlines, concept papers, tables of contents, terms of reference and draft of reports would be sent to the gender working group for advice was deleted from the final version of the work plan. At the same meeting, however, the work plan was also criticised for being too centred on the GWG and EMHRN, which could indicate a desire amongst the members of the EC to ensure the gender equality is in fact institutionalised. . It should, however, be emphasised that although the gender infrastructure issue was brought up during EC discussions on the new organisational structure, it was not included in the organisational analysis carried out to provide a point of departure for further discussions, neither in the Terms of Reference (ToR) nor in the final report of the consultant. All staff was given the chance to provide feedback on the report, including the members of the gender team, but since the analysis did not deal with the issue of ensuring that expertise in gender mainstreaming would be available to staff, it was

left up to the gender team carry out this analysis separately ex post and on its own. Furthermore, not including it in the report means that the gender infrastructure was not automatically part of the reflections on the report and thus could end up not being dealt with the way it should when discussing and deciding on a new organisational structure. This scenario should be avoided at all costs.

Thus, although a significant amount of support and leadership has been shown in relation to gender equality at the political and managerial level, gender mainstreaming has not been employed systematically or consistently.

2.1.3 Awareness of the gender issue throughout the organisation

The 2008 Gender Audit found that there was an increasing awareness amongst staff about the gender mainstreaming commitment of the EMHRN. Interviews with three project coordinators, one project officer, several talks with the program director as well as observations and informal talks with the staff of the Copenhagen office show the awareness of the gender issue has remained rather high amongst staff and management, which also seem motivated to ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all levels. When it comes to the question of technical expertise in terms of putting this awareness into practice, however, it seems to be challenged by a lack of specific specialist knowledge and information on gender perspectives in the subject area or policy field in question and a limited amount of time and resources available for identifying and plugging the data gaps. This challenge will be treated in more detail in the section below.

Thus, this Gender Audit finds that the IGE at the ethical and political level is very high and was strengthened significantly through the development and adoption of a Policy Paper on Gender Equality in the autumn of 2010, which specify the implications of the commitments made in the statutes, the bylaws and the WG concept paper even further, linked the gender equality agenda of the network to specific human rights conventions, defined gender mainstreaming as a means of achieving gender equality in the region and provided a set of objectives. Thus, it confirms the findings of the 2008 Gender Audit. The commitments, however, tend to have a very explicit focus on gender balance in decision-making bodies, whereas there seems to be an implicit assumption that gender competence is available and to some extent goes hand in hand with gender balance. This, however, cannot be assumed. In fact, it is rarely the case. Thus, the documents should be revisited for a discussion on including commitments to ensure that the gender competence is available.

2.2 IGE at the technical/expertise level

2.2.1 Integration of gender in planning, fundraising, monitoring and assessments

In 2010, the EMHRN secured funding for a project on gender equality and women's rights in the Euro-Med region from the European Commission. Activities aimed at increasing the level of gender mainstreaming in the EMHRN structures and activities were included in the application submitted by the network, but unfortunately no funding was granted. Thus, the EMHRN does plan, fundraise, monitor and assess its work on women's rights as part of its gender equality and women's rights project, and as such the issue of promoting gender equality and women's rights in the region is always included in all overall documents describing the planning, fundraising, monitoring and assessments of EMHRN activities. When it comes to the practice of mainstreaming gender into the descriptions and action taken

in the different thematic areas of the network, however, neither the overall documents nor the applications for specific projects offer much in terms of gendered analysis or gender mainstreaming. They describe the situation and needs of “human rights defenders”, “migrants” and “Palestinians”, but very seldom reflect gendered context and problem analysis, which are then made an integral part of the design and evaluation of the programmes. Moreover, gender equality and women’s rights tend to evaporate when moving from the strategic to the tactical and the operational levels, i.e. to be more visible in the overall work programme than in project applications/fundraising, monitoring and assessments. Thus, the Gender Audit finds that although the EMHRN should definitely be commended for having prioritised gender equality in terms of obtaining funding for a project aimed at promoting it, planning, fundraising and monitoring and assessments as such cannot be termed gender sensitive, and gender mainstreaming is still not taking place systematically in these EMHRN activities. To increase the gender sensitivity of these processes and documents, measures such as the development of guidelines with specific questions to be asked aimed to ensure that data on gendered aspects of the issue in question are collected during the process of identifying problems and risks. Also, monitoring and assessments should be based on gender indicators, benchmarks and targets for the different projects of the EMHRN, which should be established in the LFA’s.

2.2.2 Mechanisms for the incorporation of gender analysis and expertise in gender mainstreaming

The EMHRN has established mechanisms aimed at enabling the incorporation of gender analysis and expertise in gender mainstreaming at all levels of the network. They will be accounted for below. It should, however, be stressed that the efficiency of the organisational infrastructure related to gender equality and women’s rights (gender infrastructure) remains challenged by a variety of factors, particularly the scarcity of human resources. Some reflections on the pitfalls of the current setup will be presented afterwards and it is the finding and strong recommendation of this gender audit that these be discussed and dealt with by the relevant actors as an integral part of the discussion on the new organisational structure of the network.

The GWG

The EMHRN has a Working Group on Gender and Women’s Rights (GWG), which plays a pivotal role in relation to advancing gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN. The Terms of Reference of the GWG stipulate that the working group “...monitors all of the EMHRN’s activities at all levels and suggests a plan (approach) for mainstreaming and institutionalizing gender. This includes presenting observations and suggestions on studies, reports, training manuals, seminars, workshops and other matters.” The GWG acts as a source of expertise serving as much as it can different parties involved in the EMHRN, the members of GWG, the EMHRN’s other Working Groups and other parties. Its activities include conducting regular reviews of gender mainstreaming and the institutionalisation of gender; providing support at different organizational levels of EMHRN to guarantee the participation of women at different levels and gender balance in different EMHRN’s activities; presenting proposals to the EMHRN addressing the process of mainstreaming and the specific work and activities needed to promote and protect women’s rights; providing the EMHRN and its members with information about gender-related activities and expertise, including the process of gender mainstreaming; and providing the member organizations with critical observations about gender-related issues. In this capacity it provided input and feedback on documents on various levels including the new EMHRN strategy for

2012-2018 and some ToR for WG reports. This practice, however, is not described or formalised in any of the core documents and not applied in all relevant cases.

The Political Referent for Gender

At the highest level, the EC has appointed a Political Referent for Gender and Women's rights, which according to bylaws must be part of the steering group of the EC (the Quartet) as the only political referent of the EC. The Political Referent takes part in the meetings of the GWG and can thus make the knowledge and insights gained through the activities of the Working Group available in both fora. This access constitutes a pivotal mechanism for enabling the incorporation of gender analysis and expertise in gender mainstreaming into the work of the politically elected leadership of the EC, as it gives the GWG, in whose meetings the Political Referent takes part, a unique way of getting their voices heard within the organisation. The importance of having invented and kept this position and defined the individual holding it as a mandatory member of the Quartet, thus facilitating a flow of information between the EC/Quartet and the GWG, should not be underestimated. However, since the Political Referent is chosen from the group of individuals comprising the EC based on a set of rules governing the election and selection processes, which emphasises gender balance, but do not mention knowledge of gender equality or expertise in gender mainstreaming (gender competence), the network could end up with a Political Referent for Gender, who has limited knowledge or even motivation to take full advantage of this unique position. Hence, although the two previous political referent for gender have been very interested in the issue of gender equality and women's rights and have had expertise in gender analysis and mainstreaming, such personal interest and expertise cannot be assumed to exist, and the core texts of the network do not make provisions to ensure that this is the case. Thus, efforts should be made to assess the gender competence of the individual appointed for Political Referent for Gender, identify training needs, ensure that s/he is trained in e.g. gendered analysis and gender mainstreaming and has the knowledge about gender issues needed to perform his/her duties as political referent. Also, efforts could be made prior to the GA to ensure that gender competent individuals/organisations run for the EC, and that the member organisations casting their votes at the election are aware of the network's objective of having a gender competent EC.

The Director of the Gender Project/ the Gender Team

The director of the gender project acts as resource person for the other coordinators, management and the EC and is very active in terms of reminding everyone to mainstream gender, providing information on the gender aspects of an issue and advising staff on gender mainstreaming. In 2010, she conducted a session with her fellow coordinators aimed at uncovering challenges to gender mainstreaming in the WGs and increasing the ability of the coordinators to mainstream gender. The director of the gender project is supported by an administrative assistant and a project assistant, and together they make up the Gender Team. In the past the gender team included an intern changing every six months, but the decision to hire project assistant in 2010 means that the Women's Rights and Gender Mainstreaming project now has a higher degree of continuity in the implementation. The team operates from the EMHRN office in Amman, which was opened in 2010. The director of the gender project is a key resource person, but she is also the manager of the gender equality and women's rights project as well as the head of office in Amman. All the roles she needs to play in addition to being a gender focal point seem to be preventing her from putting her gender mainstreaming expertise to full use in terms of providing input to internal processes and activities.

Job descriptions

The task of ensuring implementation of gender mainstreaming into the activities related to management and projects has been included in the job descriptions of most managers and coordinators with head of administration as an exception. It does, however, not apply to project officers, administrative assistants or communication officers. Since project officers, administrative assistants and communication officers all work under the supervision of other staff members, who have been tasked with ensuring gender mainstreaming, it could of course be argued that the degree to which they mainstream gender falls under the responsibility such staff. However, to institutionalise gender equality and realise the commitment of applying gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy of the network, it should be specified in the job descriptions of all staff, even the ones supervised by others. Moreover, some of the staff interviewed for this audit was not aware that task of ensuring gender mainstreaming was included in their job description, and the actual wording of this obligation does not specify that the staff member must possess knowledge of what and how to mainstream, when mainstreaming gender. Thus, it remains key to the implementation of such a commitment that all staff members are aware of it and know what is expected from them in relation to their own line of work. This could e.g. take place during a session at the staff development days or an all staff meeting.

Other mechanisms

Two other mechanisms enabling the incorporation of gender analysis and expertise in gender mainstreaming in the WGs have been planned/suggested. The first mechanism is to have a **gender focal point in each EMHRN WG** to guarantee gender mainstreaming of their structures and activities. However, although mentioned in the work plan adopted by the EC to support the implementation of the Policy Paper on Gender Equality and scheduled to take place from October 2010- April 2011, no Gender Focal Points have been identified, appointed or trained yet. Interviews with a sample of WG coordinators showed that although several types of actors were suggested to take on this role - a WG member, the director of the gender project or a resource person with knowledge of gender in relation to the issue dealt with by the working group - the idea of having a gender focal point in the group was much welcomed by the interviewees. The second mechanism is **files/fiches highlighting the main issues related to gender, women's rights and gender equality in relation** to the different thematic areas of the EMHRN in the three languages by that particular WG. The former EC member and political referent for gender presented examples of such **file/fiche** at an awareness-raising seminar on IGE in the EMHRN in the autumn of 2010. The fiches are now available in three languages and efforts should be made to make them an integral part of the work of the WGs.

Lastly, a variety of other monitoring and assessment mechanisms exist, which do not make explicit references to the EMHRN objectives related to gender equality or includes gender indicators, but should include such indicators as a consequence of adopted gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy. Examples include mechanisms for choosing WG members and evaluating the activity level and contributions of WG members. Not making explicit references to them, however, makes it easier to forget and omit, moreover, it makes gender equality and women's rights less tangible when applying them or assessing their application.

Thus, the EMHRN has established several mechanisms enabling the incorporation of gender analysis and expertise in gender mainstreaming and plan to establish more in the future. This Gender Audit, however, identified some constraints and issues, which must be taken into consideration when assessing

the efficiency of those mechanisms. The director of the gender and women's rights project, the political referent and the GWG have been given access to various fora within the organization and are thus able to influence some of the processes - decision-making as well as administrative – that are key to determining the direction in which the network is headed. E.g. the GWG was the only WG that was given the mandate to comment on the overall strategy, since it was argued that the document has to be gender mainstreamed. Moreover, a project assistant has been hired to support the implementation of the Women's Rights and Gender Mainstreaming project in order to ensure a higher degree of continuity. Human resources, however, remain scarce, and making it the responsibility of the GWG to monitor and support gender mainstreaming internally means that reaching the objective of systematic integration of the gender dimension is made vulnerable to the availability of expertise in gender mainstreaming of individuals that meet once every six months and whose involvement in the GWG is itself dependent on their employment with organisations to which they are expected to deliver a certain amount of hours and energy. Furthermore, tasking the GWG with playing the role of watchdog vis-à-vis the other WGs, thus giving its members authority to interfere but not decide what should take place and be discussed in other WGs could foster a negative attitude towards the GWG. Thus, the findings of the gender audit indicate that the gender infrastructure should be revisited and rethought as an integral part of the organisational restructuring process taking place. Suggestions regarding the setup will be made in the conclusions and recommendations section, but they include recruiting a permanent staff member with a clear job description and mandate to support gender mainstreaming activities at all levels.

2.3 IGE in strategies, programmes and activities

2.3.1 Incorporation of the GE dimension into EMHRN strategies⁷

A word search using the words *gender, women, men, equality and mainstreaming* in both the current EMHRN strategy and the proposal for a new strategy sent to the member organisations prior to the 2012 GA showed that the network has come a long way with regard to institutionalising gender equality at the strategic level. Whereas the word gender was only used nine times in the old strategy, it is used 47 times in the new draft strategy, and the word women is used 44 times in the new strategy compared to 23 times in the old one. A qualitative analysis of the two documents confirms this finding.

In the 2006-2011 strategy paper "*gender equality and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women and women's participation in public life*" are emphasized as key values guiding and shaping the EMHRN. In the proposed strategy 2012-2018 this is taken even further. In a similar manner, gender equality and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women and women's participation in public life are mentioned as key values of the network. However, more emphasis is put on it so far as it is inserted as a separate paragraph below the list of key values. Moreover, it is specified that embracing gender equality and women's participation as key values means that the work and the organisational methods of the network will be gender mainstreamed and that specific actions will be developed aimed at concretely promoting gender equality in the region based on the Policy Paper on Gender Equality, which is defined as an integral part of the EMHRN's strategy and added as an annex to the strategy. In the 2006-2011 strategy paper women's rights, gender equality and mainstreaming was identified as one of four issues of regional strategic importance, and an entire

⁷ This section deals with the overall strategy of the network. Other strategies such as the overall work programme and the working group ToR are dealt with in other sections.

paragraph is devoted to explaining why gender equality and mainstreaming is “*a key issue*”. In the proposed strategy for 2012-2018 gender equality or lack thereof is mentioned four times in the section describing the challenges facing the region, and the commitment to mainstream gender is reiterated in the description of the thematic priority areas to be worked in at the regional and national levels. E.g. the proposal states: “*The EMHRN...will support women’s rights organisations in their fight to promote gender equality and women’s rights in political transitions where patriarchal regimes prevail, the social and political environment is hostile to women’s rights, and gender based discrimination and violence persist.*” (Draft EMHRN Strategy 2012-2018, p. 15). Talking about “patriarchal regimes” and a political environment “hostile to women’s rights” are examples of a gendered analysis of the political transition process dealing with the underlying structures hampering the realisation of women’s rights and gender equality. Apart from this instance, however, men are not mentioned, reflecting a tendency to focus only on women when talking about gender. When moving from the analysis of the context in which the EMHRN operates to the strategy, the obligation to “*Consider systematically in all activities whether there are specific gender issues to look into and integrate a gender perspective accordingly*” is mentioned in the description of the work to be done on the six thematic issues supported by the network. Missing from the strategy, however, are gendered analysis and specific examples of actions to be taken in order to address gender equality and women’s rights within the programmes. The strategy is of course overall in nature, but not mentioning specific interventions renders it less likely that such analysis is actually carried out in the process of designing the project proposals and during the discussions on the progress and achievements in relation to its implementation. Thus, although the commitment to ensure mainstreaming of the strategy could have been reflected even more in the final draft, and although the 2012 GA could amend it, the proposal shows that a will and commitment to ensuring that gender equality is institutionalised further within the strategies and the programmes of the EMHRN.

2.3.2 Incorporation of the GE dimension into the working tools of the EMHRN

Two of the main working tools of the EMHRN are the EMHRN Concept Paper on Working Groups and the Guidelines for the functioning of the EMHRN Working Groups, which specify what a working group is, and how it should carry out its work. The concept paper was adopted by the 2008 GA, whereas the Guidelines were adopted by the EC in 2009. The commitment made to promotion of equality between men and women made in the statutes is iterated in the concept paper in so far as gender equality is mentioned as the second of eight key values that guide and shape the network and its working groups. More specifically it states that the network is guided by “*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.*” (WG concept paper p. 2) Furthermore, it stipulates that the EMHRN has adopted gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy to be applied in all structures and all programmes as a means to achieve gender equality and employed by the Working Groups, who are also obligated to “*...work systematically on promotion and protection of gender equality.*” A footnote describes that this involves adopting “*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*”. (WG Concept Paper p. 5) Some degree of gender mainstreaming can be found in the document as well. The lack of institutional capacity to sustain reform such as women’s participation in public life is mentioned specifically as one the severe problems facing the Euro-Med region, and the possibility of synergy between the WGs on migration and gender is used an example of the EMHRN commitment to ensuring

that the WG do not work in isolation. Also, his/her and s/he are used to describe the members and staff. Moreover, the concept paper makes commitments to gender balance; this time as something to be strived for when putting together a WG. This commitment is iterated in the Guidelines for the Functioning of the WGs, but apart from that the guidelines do not mention gender equality, women's rights or gender mainstreaming in any way. Thus, when moving from concept to specific guidelines the gender mainstreaming commitment disappears; this renders it less likely that it will be included in the activities of the WGs. The implications of this will be discussed below.

2.3.3 Incorporation of the GE dimension into EMHRN programmes and activities

The Gender Audit looked at the incorporation of gender into 1) The EMHRN Working Groups⁸ and 2) EMHRN communication and advocacy efforts.

*EMHRN WGs*⁹

Except for the **Terms of Reference (TOR)** of the Justice WG, and of course that of the GWG, none of the WG ToR/WG mandate documents make explicit reference to issues related to neither gender equality, women's rights nor gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy to be applied in all structures and all programmes as a means to achieve gender equality and to be employed by the WGs. All ToR must be approved by the EC. Thus, the gender audit finds that the WG ToR are not gender sensitive, and that gender equality has not been institutionalised in the process of developing or approving the WG ToR. To deepen IGE at this level and live up to the commitments regarding gender mainstreaming made in the WG Concept Paper, making the ToR more gender sensitive should be part of the discussions taking place when writing the ToR for the new WGs following a new call for participation after the 2012 GA. Hence, this Gender Audit finds that although gender mainstreaming has been adopted as a transversal strategy it is not mentioned in description of the WG ToR, and this seems to be directly related to the fact that it is omitted in the WG guidelines as mentioned earlier.

Agendas, minutes and decisions reveal that gender equality and women's rights seem to be discussed in all WGs to some extent. They were, however, very rarely a separate point on the agenda, and the minutes mostly refer to someone mentioning "*the gender equality issue*". This makes it hard for someone not present at the meeting to know, what was actually said. Thus, more effort should be put into including a more nuanced account of what was said in the minutes, as this would increase visibility and ensure that the information about the gendered aspects of the subject/policy field in question was shared with people not attending the meeting. Moreover, there seems to be a challenge related to finding the time necessary to access, collect and incorporate knowledge about gender equality and women's rights in relation to the specific subject dealt with in the WG. This especially rings true in the WGs without member working directly with gender equality and women's rights issues, since this requires the coordinator to spend time researching, identifying potential partners or relying on the director of the gender project to do so, whereas the WGs that have members working with gender equality and

⁸ The gender audit looked at four WGs: The WG on Freedom of Association; the WG on Human Rights Education; the WG on Migration, Refugees and Asylum seekers and the WG on Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians.

⁹ The sources used were a) The WG Terms of Reference and b) the meeting agendas and minutes. These sources were supplemented with interviews with the coordinators.

women's rights issues have a more readily available access to such information and tend to incorporate it more.

EMHRN communication and advocacy

The staff members involved in advocacy and communication are very engaged in issues related to gender equality and women's rights and have made great effort to make it an integral part of communication and advocacy. The advocacy team (related Brussels staff) is and has always been keen to mainstream gender in the advocacy missions, yet national members participating in these missions have been reluctant to raise gender issues and resisted ensuring gender balance in the composition of these missions. Thus, although the intention and motivation is there as well as the efforts to do it, the gender dimension is still not integrated systematically with regular gender sensitive communication at all times. It is recommended to conduct a study of this particular issue reviewing examples of internal and external communication work to understand what is needed in terms of moving forward.

2.4 Organisational structures and culture

2.4.1 Working environment and a corporate culture promoting gender equality

A look at gender disaggregated statistics for EMHRN staff shows that women dominate the middle and lower levels of the structure (coordinators, project officers, project assistants and administrative assistants), while the management group is gender balanced with three male and two female directors.

The EMHRN staff rules and regulations document outlines the rules and regulations pertaining to salaried staff working for the EMHRN, and it is an annex to all staff contracts. It shows some kind of gender sensitivity in so far as it uses the terms his/her and s/he. Moreover, it contains 48 sections of which four deal specifically with gender related issues. Sections 23 and 41 outline the rules for maternity/parental leave for staff based in Denmark and in Belgium, whereas articles 28 and 47 (for the Copenhagen and the Brussels offices respectively) deal with violence and moral and sexual harassment in the work place. In terms of maternal/parental leave the staff rules and regulations stipulate that fully paid and unpaid parental leave for staff members is granted according to local law of the duty station, unless otherwise specified in the individual contracts. This is interesting in so far as the Danish and Belgian rules differ in terms of both parents' access to paid leave and leave especially fathers employed in Denmark better off than those employed in accordance with Belgian rules.¹⁰ In terms of salaries, total costs of an employee regardless of duty station is based on a salary scale reflecting the composition and the various categories of the EMHRN staff and numbers of years of work experience of categories of staff. In addition, an increment is paid to staff members who have agreed to be at the disposal for a certain number of hours per year. In principle, this seems to leave little room for individual negotiations and serves as a good point of departure for equal pay and opportunities for male and female staff.

¹⁰ According to Danish law, the mother is entitled to at least 26 weeks of leave on full salary with the possibility of 32, whereas the father is entitled to at least 2 weeks on full salary with the possibility of 8 or even 14). According to Belgian law the mother is entitled to 30 weeks on full salary, whereas the father is only entitled to 2 weeks on full salary. Hence, whereas women stationed in Belgium could end up receiving full salary for four weeks more than women in Denmark, they could also end up receiving two weeks less. In contrast, men stationed in Denmark could end up being better off than those stationed in Belgium.

The EMHRN travel security policy mentions the risk of rape or sexual assault as part of one of the main security risks (Robbery and assault). Moreover, a contact person mechanism has been set up, which could especially make more female staff feel safer when travelling as a representative of the network. The staff development policy does not include provisions specifically related to gender, but it is gender aware in so far as it uses the terms his/her (supervisor for instance) and s/he to describe staff members.

2.4.2 Incorporation of gender into administrative tasks and procedures

Some effort has been made to incorporate gender equality into the administrative tasks and procedures of the network. One example is the procedure for introducing new staff members to the network, which is supported by the staff handbook. The handbook includes the Policy Paper on Gender Equality, which the table of contents defines as a main document of the EMHRN. Moreover, it includes other core documents making commitments to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, including the ‘Job description and positions’ paper mentioned in section 2.2.2, which defines ensuring gender mainstreaming as a task to be performed by most staff members. As it does not explicitly state a need to be familiar with gender nor describes further what the obligation entails, however, the awareness may just be of a general nature rather than a clear picture and thus have little or no impact on staff behaviour. Also, even though exposing new staff members to the Policy Paper and giving them access to the commitments from the very beginning of their employment is a step in the right direction, the procedure could be further strengthened by supplementing it with measures aimed at enhancing their knowledge of the commitments and their implications.

2.4.3 Incorporation of gender in human resource management and staff development

The staff development policy is rather general in nature and rarely provides examples of training needs. In so far as it does, however, knowledge of the gender issues or skills related to gender mainstreaming are not mentioned. E.g. the policy states: “*Staff members have the possibility to learn new skills, competencies or knowledge that, beyond the basic required skills, will help them perform their tasks in a more satisfactory – and fulfilling – manner. This may include general knowledge on the region’s culture and politics, communication, advocacy, fund raising, advanced project management skills, leadership skills (management), EU knowledge, advanced knowledge in the respective fields of work (migration, Justice, administration, leadership, etc.), etc.*” (Staff Training and Development Policy, p. 2). Although the term “advanced knowledge in the respective fields of work” does cover knowledge of the gender aspects in the field of work, it is not stated explicitly. Moreover, it could be argued that such knowledge is not knowledge that goes beyond the basic required skills, but that it is in fact a basic required skill and should thus be mentioned as such. This was the case at the 2011 Staff Development Days, which included a four hour session on the EMHRN Gender Policy. The session included a presentation of the EMHRN Policy Paper on Gender Equality as well as a group exercise on identifying and countering different types of resistance to gender mainstreaming and gender equality.

2.5 Women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies

2.5.1 Women's rights organisations in the EMHRN

The 2008 Gender Audit found that six EMHRN member organisations were women's rights organisations of which two had been granted membership since the General Assembly in 2006. Today, nine EMHRN member organisations are registered as specialising in women's rights issues¹¹. This translates to an increase from 8,6 to 13,9 % of the EMHRN membership. The number of organisations specialising in women's rights increased in spite of a slight decrease in the number of regular members as such from 2008-2012 (from 69 to 65), and the information was easily accessible from the membership overview, which included a summary of the number of regular members specialising in women's rights.¹² Also, there has been an increase in spite of the fact that a proposed amendment to the statutes suggesting a paragraph in the conditions regarding admission stating a commitment to encourage the admission of women's rights organisations in order to achieve a significant representation of these organisations in its membership was not adopted by the 2008 General Assembly. Looking into the circumstances leading to the application of membership by these organisations is beyond the scope of this audit, but the increase shows that there is at least a will amongst those responsible for recommending or refusing admission of the organisations (the Executive Committee) to increase the representation of women's rights organisations in its membership.

2.5.2 Male and female participation in the structures of the EMHRN

The General Assembly

The ratio of women to men representing the regular¹³ and associate members at the 2008 GA was 42% to 58% (22 women, 31 men). In comparison, the 2006 GA had a 33% to 67 % ratio of women to men (23 women, 46 men). Also when looking at gender balance in overall attendance the ratio of women to men had improved from 40%/60% in 2006 (43 women, 64 men) to 44%/56% in 2008 (65 women, 81 men)¹⁴. Hence, attendance statistics from the 2008 GA show that representation was relatively gender balanced, and that progress had made in relation to living up the commitment of aiming at gender balance in the representatives of regular members and associate members at the GA. A glance at the preliminary list of participants for the 2012 GA, however, shows that although there has been an increase in the number of women representing regular and associate members from 23 to 31, there has

¹¹ The EMHRN member organisations specialising in women's rights are: Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM); Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD); Collectif 95 - Maghreb Egalité; Sisterhood is Global Institute (SIGI); Kvinna till Kvinna; Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies; Fédération Nationale Solidarité Femmes; KVINFORM – Danish Centre for Information on Gender, Equality and Ethnicity; and Women's Centre for Legal Aid Counselling (WCLAC).

¹² This measure is flawed, since it counts only the organisations specialising in women's rights. Thus, organisations promoting women's rights and gender equality through gender mainstreaming or gender specific interventions, organisations with knowledge of gender within their area of focus, and organisations that do not identify themselves as women's rights organisations, but promotes such rights are not included in this number. E.g. 11 out of the 19 organisations represented in the GWG are not included in the list of organisations specialised in women's rights in the membership overview, but are for the most part defined as generalist organisations. They have, however, chosen to become part of a working group dealing specifically with women's rights and gender equality and must therefore have an interest of some sort in the subject. A good example is ACSUR, which is headed by the Political Referent on Gender. The number of member organisations promoting gender equality and women's rights is presumably higher.

¹³ This number includes individual and new members.

¹⁴ With an increase in the number of attendees by 39 people from 2006 to 2008, the 40/60 balance seen in 2006 would translate to 58 women and 87 men in 2008.

also been an increase on the number of men from 31 to 53, thus offsetting a decrease in the degree of gender balance from 42% in 2008 to 37 % in 2012. And this seems to be the case in relation to overall attendance as well. Thus, the progress made from 2006 to 2008 with regard to gender balance cannot be taken for granted and must be addressed in the process of organising GAs in the future. Also, following up on the EMHRN objective of ensuring gender balance at the GA could be made easier by including information on gender balance in the GA minutes document.¹⁵

The Executive Committee

The EC elected at the 2008 General Assembly had ten members: four female and six male, whereas the Quartet has five members: two female and three male (including the executive director). Although not completely gender balanced, a ratio of 4 women to 6 men is close to being gender balanced, and with a Quartet ratio of two women to three men (or the opposite) the steering group is also gender balanced.¹⁶ Having committed itself to *strive* at having an EC that includes an equal number of men and women, the network is to a large extent walking the talk. In comparison, the Executive Committee elected at the 2006 GA comprised of 5 women and 7 men and was thus close to being completely gender balanced as well. Achieving complete gender balance is possible and should be pursued actively in the years to come. The EC election, however, is and must be a democratic process, and the result cannot be predicted beforehand. Furthermore, other objectives such as achieving equal geographical representation are also pursued when deciding who should make up the new EC. It can thus prove difficult to realise the commitment of achieving a completely gender balanced EC, but it is important to remain committed. Also, in 2008 and 2012, only one person – a man – ran for the presidency. In the future, further efforts could be made to have a female candidate for this post as well. Moreover, a look at the minutes of the EC meetings taking place from 2009-2011 shows that the female EC members have become more active, i.e. when it comes to chairing and moderating sessions at EC meetings there has been a noticeable increase in the number of sessions moderated by female members of the EC. Whereas the number of EC sessions moderated by male members of the EC remained the same (34 from 2006-2008 and 35 from 2009-2011), there has been a drastic increase in the amount of sessions moderated by female members. Whereas only 18 sessions at eight meetings taking place from 2006-2008 were moderated by a female EC member, 50 sessions at an equal number of meetings taking place from 2009-2011 were moderated by a female member. Although this is partly due to an increase in the number of sessions as such (from 52 to 85), the female members of the EC tended to chair EC meetings equally to or even more than the male EC members from 2009-2011.

Thus, the involvement of women in decision-making processes; and partnerships with and involvement of NGOs that promote women's interests (rights) has increased from 2009-2012. Absolute gender balance in the EC could prove difficult to obtain in view of factors mentioned above, namely that democracy must be allowed to run its course and that objectives related to equal geographical

¹⁵ However, gender equality and the issue of ensuring the promotion of women's rights in the Euro Med region was raised on several occasions during the 2012 General Assembly, partly but not entirely due to the fact that there was a high attendance rate amongst the women's rights organisations of the network, which left their mark on both the program seminar and General Assembly. The Policy Paper on Gender Equality was adopted by the participants, and the new EC elected at the 2012 GA was gender balanced. Thus, although gender balance should be considered a goal in itself and should be pursued as such, other indicators related to the content of the discussions and the weight given to the issue by the participants should be employed as well.

¹⁶ At present (May 2012) the Quartet has five members: The President (Male), the Vice President (Female), the Political Referent for Gender (Female), the Treasurer (Male) and the Executive Director (Male).

representation must be pursued as well. A first step, however, could be to encourage both competent women and men to run for the elections. Moreover, as discussed in the technical/expertise section above, it may prove useful to focus on electing an Executive Committee that is not only gender balanced, but also gender sensitive and gender competent. As for the GA, the participants tend to be the presidents of the member organisations, and they tend to be male.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Gender Audit identified some gaps between the commitments made to gender equality in the EMHRN core documents and the actual implementation of these commitments. This chapter summarises the strong and weak points in relation to gender mainstreaming efforts, points to the key obstacles and ways to overcome them; and recommends specific measures aimed at advancing the IGE in the EMHRN including the strengthening of gender mainstreaming work of EMHRN and its members.

3.1 Strong and weak points in relation to gender mainstreaming efforts

The gender audit found several strong points. A strong political will is present at the highest level within the organisation, and action has been taken in order to advance gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN. E.g. the Policy Paper on Gender Equality has been adopted specifying further what gender mainstreaming entails along with a work programme outlining specific activities to be carried out by the GWG to support the implementation process. The core documents make strong commitments to gender balance at all levels, and a lot of progress has been made in relation to making them a reality. Mechanisms enabling support to and hopefully sustaining gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN exist, and gender mainstreaming expertise exists within the network. The gender director, the political referent and the GWG are devoted and have been given access to some of the fora and processes within the EMHRN that are pivotal to IGE at the overall strategic levels of the network. Women are involved in decision-making processes at all levels, and the network has formalised partnerships with nine NGOs specialising in the promotion of women's rights, which participate in the activities of the network. Lastly, there is willingness amongst staff and management to take responsibility for gender mainstreaming and work to increase the level of gender mainstreaming in activities and programmes.

However, although many commitments are made and mechanisms enabling gender analysis and gender mainstreaming have been established, there are some weak points as well. Firstly, although many commitments have been made to gender equality and gender mainstreaming within the core documents, responsibility is rarely clearly placed. The commitments have become more specific with the Policy Paper on Gender Equality, they still need to be specified even further and made operational to each actor/body/employee, and there are no mechanisms in place sanctioning lack of implementation. Human and financial resources to support gender mainstreaming and conduct regular follow-up are very scarce, and this impacts negatively on the ability of the network to deliver on the commitments made in to gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy to be applied at all levels. Gender mainstreaming is not systematically applied in EMHRN activities, and there is still a lack of knowledge of gender issues a clear definition of best/good practice at the operational levels in the thematic areas dealt with in the working groups. There is a need for more knowledge and skills in how practically to go about doing gender mainstreaming among staff and working group members, and gender competence is not included as a criterion for the selection of staff, members of the EC or the WGs.

3.2 Main challenges and recommendations for overcoming them

The 2008 Gender Audit found two main challenges: Firstly, communicating the EMHRN commitment to gender mainstreaming to the member organisations and convincing them of the advantages of adopting a gender mainstreaming approach in their own work. Secondly, systematically mainstreaming gender into all EMHRN activities. This gender audit finds that the level of IGE in the EMHRN has increased since 2008. The increase, however, has mainly taken place at the ethical and political level,

and while there has been an increase in the degree to which the commitments to gender mainstreaming and gender equality are incorporated into the structures and activities of the network, it is still not done consistently nor systematically, and the degree to which it takes place is heavily dependent on the expertise and availability of a few committed individuals within the network. And in spite of the efforts made to specify the commitments even further, strengthen the gender infrastructure and promote the inclusion of gender perspective into the EMHRN structures and activities since the 2008 Gender Audit, *this audit finds that the lack of systematic and consistency in the process of translating the commitments to gender mainstreaming into practice remains the main challenge to the realisation of EMHRN commitments to the promotion of gender equality and women's participation in the Euro-Med region. The main obstacle in this regard seems to be the scarcity of human and financial resources as the individuals and bodies currently providing gendered analysis and having expertise in gender mainstreaming are few and busy fulfilling other responsibilities.*

Therefore, the overall and most pertinent recommendation of this gender audit is to recruit a full time permanent staff member with a variety of tasks aimed at supporting actors at all levels of the EMHRN live up to their responsibilities in relation to implementing the Policy Paper on Gender Equality and the commitment to systematically mainstream gender into the structures and activities of the network.

This staff member would allow management, staff, WGs and the EC to participate in and carry out gendered analysis supported by this staff member and over time build the gender competence necessary to carry out such analysis and integrate gender equality on their own. Moreover, s/he would be able to support the GWG, the gender team and the Political Referent for Gender in their efforts to monitor the progress made in relation to IGE within the EMHRN.

Moreover, other steps should be taken by a variety of actors within the network to promote IGE in the EMHRN and promote a systematic use of the gender mainstreaming within its structures and activities.

Recommendations to the EC

1. Develop a work plan for the implementation of the Policy Paper on Gender Equality. The work plan should not be limited to the GWG, but should cover actors at all levels of the network and clearly outline responsibilities and timing of the activities stipulated in the plan.
2. Adopt measures¹⁷ aimed at ensuring that all members of the Executive Committee, management, staff, working group members and member organisations know of and possess the EMHRN Policy Paper on Gender Equality and have a clear understanding of their own role and responsibilities in relation to its implementation.

¹⁷ In addition to measures such as distributing the policy paper along with the work/implementation plan (and the gender audit) and using it actively when admitting new member and staff (at all levels), increasing awareness of commitments, roles and responsibilities could be supported by translating the policy paper into an overview/LFA stating who is responsible for the fulfilment of the objectives stated in the policy paper. This would make the implementation process more tangible and provide staff, EC and management with a clearer picture of the action to be taken by each individual/actor/body in order to live up to the commitments made in the core documents as well as the working tools of the network.

3. Always include gendered analysis and the input of individuals/organisations with expertise in gender mainstreaming in discussions and decisions on issues such as amendments to core documents, membership applications, organisational restructuring, strategy development, methodology, budgeting, planning and evaluations.
4. Allocate resources (including core funding) to activities aimed at ensuring gender mainstreaming of the EMHRN activities and structures and member organisations every time a budget is prepared.
5. Ensure that a sufficient amount of human and financial resources are available for monitoring and evaluating IGE within the EMHRN, including for a comprehensive gender audit¹⁸ and for regular monitoring of gender mainstreaming in EMRHN structures and activities focusing on specific areas/issues and support to staff and WG members in ensuring gender mainstreaming of their work.¹⁹

Recommendations on human resource management and staff development

6. Include gender mainstreaming in the job descriptions of all staff and develop a lengthier description of what the task entails.
7. Identify the gender competence and training needs of staff in relation to gender mainstreaming and prioritise them when deciding on training requests.
8. Hold a session on gender mainstreaming at the Staff Development Days aimed at making all staff understand their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to the gender mainstreaming commitment of the EMHRN as well as the Policy Paper on Gender Equality.

Recommendations to programme staff

9. Include knowledge of gender issues of the WG members and the propensity to share such knowledge with other members in the yearly evaluation of WG achievements, the work process and the level of involvement of members.
10. Make sure that gender equality promotion and gender mainstreaming is visible and described in depth when describing programmes, documenting achievements and taking minutes.

Recommendations on ensuring systematic gender mainstreaming in the WGs

¹⁸ The comprehensive gender audit should take place on a regular basis, e.g. biennially or when appropriate in accordance with the work plan for the implementation of the Policy Paper on Gender Equality.

¹⁹ The gender staff will be doing the gender audit, but they could be supported by staff members with a specific knowledge of the different thematic areas covered by the network.

11. Continue pursuing the objective of gender balance when selecting members for the WGs while at the same time ensuring that organisations/individuals with gender competence are chosen for the WGs.
12. Ensure that the ToR of the new WGs are gender mainstreamed and mention gender mainstreaming as a transversal strategy.
13. Appoint and train a gender focal point in each WG.
14. Develop a best practice document for each WG providing examples of how knowledge of gender could be applied in the types of activities (conferences, trainings, reports, reviews) undertaken by the WGs for inspiration and guidance.
15. Distribute the fiches on the gender aspects of the different thematic areas of the EMHRN to the members of the new WGs and use a session to discuss the implications of the fiche and the network commitment to gender mainstreaming on the future work of the WG.

Recommendations on fundraising, planning, monitoring and assessments

16. Always collect information on gender equality and women's rights and consider it systematically when developing and writing project applications and mention the findings in the context analysis, problem analysis, objectives, success criteria and indicators.
17. Include activities in the fundraising applications (including core funding) which address the gendered aspects of the theme in question and aim at promoting gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the EMHRN structures and activities, in the member organisations and in the Euro-Med region in general.
18. Make the planning and monitoring systems gender sensitive by including gender indicators, benchmarks and targets for the different thematic areas including advocacy and communication.
19. Establish and operate a gender knowledge management system as a whole involving everyone/actors at all levels (including members).

Recommendation for advancing gender mainstreaming in the EMHRN member organisations²⁰

20. Allocate resources for a separate assessment of the needs and the capacity of the EMHRN member organisations in relation to gender mainstreaming of their own work.

²⁰ The gender audit has not dealt with the work of the EMHRN member organisations. However, the commitment to ensuring the adoption of a gender mainstreaming approach by the member organisations was iterated in the Policy Paper on Gender Equality, and ensuring that the members mainstream gender into their work has for many years been a priority of the network.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference for the 2012 Gender Audit of the EMHRN

1. Introduction

This gender audit will look at the Institutionalisation of Gender Equality (IGE) in the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN).²¹ The EMHRN started to work on mainstreaming gender into its work in 2004. In 2008 a gender audit was conducted to review the gender equality situation in the policies, structures and practice of the Network and made recommendations on how to further strengthen gender mainstreaming within the EMHRN.

Four years have passed since then, and much has happened not only within the EMHRN, but also – and perhaps more importantly – in the contexts in which many members carry out their work. Hence, the time seems ripe for conducting a new gender audit as part of the IGE in the EMHRN, which can help us determine how to proceed in order to ensure that gender equality is institutionalised even further and remains on the agenda of the EMHRN and its members in the years to come.

We have decided to focus exclusively on IGE within the EMHRN and not among its members' own organisations and activities. We have taken this decision, despite the fact that one of the main findings of the 2008 audit related to the weak integration of gender equality among member organisations. This is because we strongly believe that a thorough analysis, far beyond the scope of this gender audit, is needed to map and analyse EMHRN members' commitment to gender equality, their experiences and needs, especially since gender and women's rights has become a core issue in the political transitions taking place in the wake of the Arab Spring. Thus, it is strongly recommended that such an endeavour is undertaken as part of the EMHRN gender mainstreaming efforts.

2. Purpose and objectives

Taking the findings and recommendations of the 2008 gender audit as its point of departure, the purpose of this gender audit is to shed light on the commitments of the EMHRN with regard to gender equality, women's rights and gender mainstreaming and to assess how they have been implemented. Moreover, the purpose is to recommend next steps to be taken in order to support the process of IGE in the EMHRN including gender-balanced structures and gender mainstreaming of EMHRN activities and budgets. The findings and recommendations will feed into the discussions of e.g. the Executive Committee with regard to implementing the new EMHRN Policy on Gender Equality as well as the efforts of the EMHRN Gender Working Group to support EMHRN activities at all levels and suggest a work plan for gender mainstreaming and IGE in the EMHRN.

²¹ IGE is an approach to the promotion of gender equality that is based on the basic premise that gender equality will not be achieved unless the institutions determining citizens' (or staff's) access to resources, rights and opportunities are changed. Changing such institutions is a political and technical process which requires political will at the highest level; commitment and dedication, including at the individual level; policies specifically geared towards gender equality, as well as laws based on the principle of equality; the involvement of women in decision-making processes; and partnerships with and involvement of NGOs that promote women's interests.

The immediate objectives of the gender audit are:

- 6) To highlight the commitments made by the EMHRN regarding gender equality
- 7) To clarify gaps within the EMHRN with regard to meeting these commitments
- 8) To identify our weak and strong points in relation to our gender mainstreaming efforts
- 9) To point to key obstacles and ways to overcome them; and finally
- 10) To recommend measures aimed at advancing the IGE including the strengthening of gender mainstreaming work of EMHRN and its members

The findings and recommendations of the gender audit will be presented in a 20 page report, which will be made available in all official languages of the EMHRN.

3. Methodology

Due to time constraints and in order to leave sufficient time for the inclusion of comments and input from all relevant parties, the gender audit will be carried out as a desk study supplemented by some interviews with staff and possibly other resource persons in order to verify the findings and to ensure that the recommendations are relevant and operational.

The gender audit will be done on five levels:

1. **Ethical & Political:** The audit will look at a) commitments expressed in values, vision, and mission in various basic texts; b) support and leadership of top managers; and c) awareness of the gender issue throughout the organization.
2. **Technical/expertise:** The audit will examine to what extent a) Planning in the EMHRN integrates gender; b) EMHRN's monitoring and assessment integrate gender; c) mechanisms enabling the incorporation of gender analysis are available, i.e. availability of expertise in gender mainstreaming
3. **Strategies, programmes and activities:** The audit will look at the extent to which gender equality was effectively recognized and reflected in the EMHRN strategies, programmes and working tools. The audit will review the incorporation the GE dimension into EMHRN strategies and programmes and activities.
4. **Organisational structures and culture:** The audit will assess the degree of gender balance within the EMHRN by looking at male/female participation and presence in the executive bodies, working groups and staff of the EMHRN. It will review to what extent the EMHRN, administrative tasks and procedures and human resource management take account of gender. In relation to culture, the gender audit will review the implementation of the EMHRN 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.
5. **Women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies:** The audit will review to what extent the EMHRN is ensuring and strengthening women's involvement and empowerment in decision-making bodies.