

## ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

<b>1. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. EMHRN ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>A. LOBBYING THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>5</b>
Civil Fora	6
Lobbying in relation to Brussels	8
Guide to human rights in the Barcelona process	8
The Association Agreements between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners	9
The MEDA Democracy Programme	10
EU Human Rights Discussion Forum	11
EMHRN Brussels office	11
Dialogue with governments	11
The non-dialogue with the Tunisian authorities	12
NGO and civil society co-operation	13
Annual report	13
<b>B. CAPACITY BUILDING AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>C. WOMEN'S RIGHTS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>D. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND EXPRESSION</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>E. COUNTRY REPORTS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS     DEFENDERS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFLICT     SITUATIONS</b>	<b>18</b>
Algeria	18
Egypt	19
Jordan and Lebanon	20
Morocco	21
Palestine	21
Syria	24
Tunisia	24
Turkey	26
Other questions	27
Germany	27
<b>4. INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMHRN</b>	<b>28</b>
EC meetings	28
New members	29
Cancellation of memberships	29
Membership criteria	30
New organisational status of the EMHRN	30
Funding	30
Staff	30

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES**

On April 12-13, 1999, fifty member representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network met in Stuttgart for the Third General Assembly in order to evaluate the activities of the EMHRN's first years and to discuss the future development of the Network.

They adopted a work programme outlining seven fields of activities: Lobbying the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP); protection of human rights defenders; and peace and conflict resolution.

Furthermore, the participants at the AGM made a series of recommendations for the future work of the EMHRN. These were fed into the report of the Third General Assembly as additional and important guide lines for the work of the executive bodies of the EMHRN.

In order to allow readers to evaluate the actions of the EMHRN since Stuttgart the report follows the headings of the work programme. It also describes EMHRN activities in relation to countries where specific activities have been carried out.

The period covered in this report starts from where the last annual report ended, i.e. March 1999, and leads as far as November 1, 2000. Thus it covers a period of 20 months and attempts to describe the activities that took place between the third and fourth general assembly as extensively as possible.

In the introduction, the report draws-up the main conclusions related to the past period's activities. It also seeks to clarify main phases in the development of the EMHRN as an organisational entity.

### **1. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS**

As mentioned above, the participants at the third General Assembly adopted a work programme outlining seven fields of activities for the work of the EMHRN.

To help evaluate the development of the EMHRN in the past period this chapter will summarise point by point what the EMHRN has achieved in relation to the goals it set up in April, 1999.

#### **In general**

In the period covered by this report the EMHRN has substantially developed its activities both thematically and in relation to countries. From a fragile starting point, it has increasingly become a key actor and interface in promoting and protecting human rights within the framework of the Barcelona process. Although much remains to be done, the EMHRN has developed instruments with which to expand its activities in the future.

#### **Lobbying the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership**

The EMHRN has developed a series of instruments and initiatives as a firm foundation on which to build its work on the human rights dimension of the EMP.

It has been a key actor in setting the human rights of the Civil Fora related to the EMP. It has mobilised the EMP institutions and members around its seminars, and a series of publications has become a source of reference for human rights promotion within the framework of the Barcelona process.

In addition, the EMHRN has initiated dialogue with a number of governments in the region and significantly strengthened co-operation with other international and regional human rights NGOs and civil society agents active in the region.

The EMHRN has also been involved in several actions relating to country issues. However, it has not yet been able to advocate for its concerns on a regular basis in relation to the EMP, nor to report regularly to the EMP about the human rights situation in the region. Nevertheless, preliminary work has been done, enabling the EMHRN to open an office in Brussels in order to strengthen the ability of its members to mobilise in relation to the EMP agenda and to systematise its reporting and advocacy.

### **Capacity building and human rights education**

By establishing its web site, the EMHRN has significantly increased its capacity to communicate and inform on human rights issues in the region.

It has initiated work to promote the projects of its members on a national level in countries where oppression is particularly high. Furthermore, it has sparked the development of substructures within the Network that might lead to concrete projects on the ground.

It has also initiated decentralisation of decision-making procedures by involving members in preparatory meetings, such as for the conference on women's rights and the seminar on freedom of association.

### **Women's rights**

The EMHRN is still male biased in terms of the way its membership is composed, and action on the ground has not yet been identified. On the other hand, the EMHRN has recently taken significant steps to develop actions in this field and to integrate the question of women's rights in the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process.

### **Freedom of association and expression**

The EMHRN has taken initiatives in relation to the situation in Palestine, Egypt, Jordan and Morocco.

On a regional level it has succeeded in bringing a number of NGOs together for a seminar in Morocco, which adopted a platform for future work in this priority area. The seminar was a first step in securing a basis for systematising efforts in this field and for future concerted efforts for the regional promotion of freedom of association.

In the field of freedom of expression, the activities of the EMHRN have concentrated on Jordan, and the creation of synergy with other actors is still in its

infancy.

### **Racism and xenophobia, migration and refugees and human exchange**

These issues are still considered priority areas of the EMHRN. However, it has not yet identified actions nor had sufficient resources to develop work in this field.

### **Protection of human rights defenders and human rights in conflict situations**

The EMHRN has expanded its day-to-day solidarity work significantly in relation to a regrettably high number of human rights violations and attacks on human rights defenders. Furthermore, it has increasingly succeeded in establishing co-operation with a number of international human rights organisations. Work in order to develop regional and country strategies is still in the making.

It is worth noting that during the past period the EMHRN has relied extensively on voluntary contributions from its membership base and executive bodies. Many thanks goes to all who invested time, expertise and resources.

Many thanks also goes to those agencies who have funded the EMHRN's work: The EU Commission, DANIDA, the Ford Foundation, Cordaid and the Danish Peace Foundation.

## **2. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The period covered in this report can be divided into three phases.

**Phase 1:** In January 1999, the EMHRN was able to sign its first contract with the Commission for a project proposal that had been delivered in September 1997. The late release of the contract meant that the momentum behind the 1997 proposal had changed over time. On the one hand, therefore, the EMHRN's work was limited by the necessity of having to implement a contract that was to some extent outdated<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand it allowed the EMHRN to expand its activities in a range of relevant fields.

**Phase 2:** In June, the EMHRN submitted a 2,5 million euro project to the EU Commission for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2003. The project was approved by the end of 1999, but the contract was not released until late May 2000. In the period between the expiry of the first contract and the beginning of the second, the expansion of EMHRN activities had to be temporarily scaled down.

**Phase 3:** From June 2000 onwards, the EMHRN has been able to move forward again and it expects in the future, due to favourable contractual terms, to be able to adapt in a flexible manner to the strategic and organisational guide lines

---

<sup>1</sup> The field of activities agreed upon in 1997 were: a computerised information service; an annual report; a training seminar; a booklet; a general assembly; dialogue, lobbying and campaigning; general education and capacity building and executive committee meetings.

defined the member base. It will also be able to plan future activities for longer periods, as the new contract with the EU extends to June 2004.

The various phases in the development of the EMHRN have been reflected in the work of the Executive Committee.

At the Paris meeting in July, 1999, the EC dealt mainly with assessing the results of the Third General Assembly in order to develop the organisational work of the EMHRN. Furthermore, discussions mainly concentrated upon the degree to which the network could/should develop into an activist structure. Discussions towards clarifying the strategic approach continued at the Stockholm meeting in September, 1999. In Amman in January, 2000, it was clear that longer term planning was now possible due to the improved financial situation of the EMHRN. The EC therefore embarked on developing a strategic methodology for EMHRN work. This work has been pursued up to the 4th General Assembly and the outcome is reflected in the EMHRN strategy plan.

Parallel to these meetings, the EMHRN was able to begin developing its work on a horizontal level. In April, 2000, a first workshop meeting took place on human rights education in Bray, Ireland, according to the organisational idea that the EMHRN should not primarily develop into a centralised organisations but encourage member organisations to take the lead in their field of activity and create networks with the network. Since June, 2000, the EMHRN has been able to encourage this way of working by supporting preparatory working group meetings for, respectively, a seminar on freedom of association (in Rabat) and a conference on women's rights (in Marseille) (see below for further details).

Finally, the secretariat, from relying on one full time employee, was able to employ a second staff member in September, 1999. In October 2000, a third staff member was employed and at the end of the year, the EMHRN expects to open an antenna of the secretariat in Brussels.

It is worth noting that during the past period the EMHRN has relied extensively on voluntary contributions from its membership base and executive bodies. Many thanks goes to all who invested time, expertise and resources.

Many thanks also goes to those agencies who have funded the EMHRN's work: The EU Commission, DANIDA, the Ford Foundation, Cordaid and the Danish Peace Foundation.

### **3. EMHRN ACTIVITIES**

#### **A. LOBBYING THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP**

Since the General Assembly in Stuttgart, the EMHRN has continued its work in relation to the institutions of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to help contribute to the development of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process.

## Civil Fora

### Stuttgart, April 1999

After only two years' existence the EMHRN was among the co-organisers of a Civil Forum conference on Human Rights and Civil Society in the Mediterranean<sup>2</sup> which took place in relation to the EMP Foreign Ministers' Meeting in April, 1999. In the month that preceded the General Assembly the EMHRN published a Policy Paper<sup>3</sup> in consultation with its members which was forwarded to all EMP governments and which gave a first coherent profile to the EMHRN in relation to the EMP. The Policy paper furthermore formed a basis for the declaration published by the EMHRN and the Forum des Citoyens de la Méditerranée at the conclusion of the Stuttgart Conference.<sup>4</sup>

The Stuttgart Civil Forum Conference established the EMHRN as an conspicuous actor in the Barcelona process. It was the first Civil Forum since Barcelona, 1995 where representatives of independent human rights organisations had the opportunity to express themselves and bring recommendations to the governments of the EMP in direct encounter with EMP officials. Many of the EMHRN members were present and contributed to the success of the conference through the high quality of their inputs and their involvement and commitment.

### Marseille, November 2000

Shortly before the EMP governmental meeting in Stuttgart in April, 1999, preparations for the Civil Forum in relation to the next EMP Summit were launched by a group of French NGOs in co-operation with the Quai d'Orsay. However, it was not until eight months later that human rights NGO concerns were included in the planning following a Euro-Mediterranean seminar organised by FIDH in Paris.<sup>5</sup> On this occasion, FIDH and the EMHRN were urged to co-operate in ensuring one of the Stuttgart *acquis*, i.e. that human rights should be at the forefront of the agenda of the next civil forum.

Since then, Paris-based members of the EC in co-operation with FIDH have worked intensively to ensure that human rights has become an independent item on the agenda, in close co-operation with FIDH. During the course of the year 2000, several meetings per month have taken place between interested organisations. The Civil Forum eventually came to be structured in the following way: one conference for local and regional councils (150 participants); one conference for trade unions (150 participants); and one conference for NGOs (300 participants) the latter being sub-divided into 4 themes: A. Rule of Law and

---

<sup>2</sup>With the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Forum des Citoyens de la Méditerranée.

<sup>3</sup>Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Region.

<sup>4</sup>The proceedings of the Conference on Human Rights and Civil Society in the Mediterranean were published by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Summer, 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Training workshop for NGOs from the south and east Mediterranean and preparation of the 4th Barcelona summit, Paris 15-18 November, 2000.

Democracy; B. Peace and Security; C. Culture and Human Exchange; D. Sustainable Development and Environment.

The EMHRN and FIDH took charge over co-ordinating the human rights dimension of the Civil Society Conference.

In order to focus attention around the human rights dimension and to involve human rights activists in the region in the preparations as much as possible, the EC decided at its Amman meeting in January, 2000, that ongoing activities should be integrated into the preparations for the Civil Forum, i.e.:

8-11 February, 2000, in Paris: First Euro-Mediterranean Meeting of the Families of Disappeared persons (organised by FIDH in co-operation with a number of organisations). The EMHRN supported the conference by financing the participation of two relatives of the disappeared in Algeria.

5-7 June, 2000, in Jerusalem: LAW Conference on Culture, Community and Jerusalem. The EMHRN organised and funded a panel during the conference on the role of the Barcelona process in relation to the Peace Process. It also organised a workshop on the human rights clause in the association agreements between the EU and respectively, Israel and the Palestinian National Authorities.

5-7 October, 2000, in Casablanca: Seminar on Freedom of Association in the Euro-Mediterranean region (organised by the EMHRN, Espace Associatif, the Moroccan Association of Democratic Women, and the Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights).

13-16 October, 2000, in Cairo: Conference on Human Rights Education in the Arab World (organised by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies). The EMHRN financed travel costs allowing EMHRN members to attend this Second Conference of the Arab Human Rights Movement.

21-22 October, 2000, in Stuttgart: From Stuttgart to Marseille. Conference organised by the EMHRN with a number of German partners to assess the outcome of the Civil Fora in Stuttgart and the development of the Barcelona process since April 1999.

27-28 October, 2000, in Marseille: Women between symbolic and physical violence. Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Women's Rights organised by the EMHRN and FIDH in co-operation with the French Human Rights League.

29-31 October, 2000, in Cairo: Conference on Palestinian Refugees (organised by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in co-operation with the EMHRN).

Due to the acute crisis in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the conference on women's rights and the situation of Palestinian refugees had to be postponed at the last minute. Details of the other events are described below

On 4 October, 2000, the EMHRN forwarded a letter to the EMP Foreign Ministers, encouraging them to follow-up on NGO recommendations from Stuttgart in Marseille, and to contribute to the establishment of an EMP working programme in the field of human rights, including establishing a relevant fora where human rights issues can be promoted in a concrete and action-oriented manner in consultation with civil society.

Finally, the EMHRN, in co-operation with FIDH, invited main international human rights NGOs<sup>6</sup> to collaborate in organising a joint press conference on the opening day of the EMP Ministerial Meeting in order to highlight the importance of the human rights dimension for the region. Each organisation was asked to make an assessment of the development of the human rights situation within selected fields since November, 1995, to assess the impact of the Barcelona process on the human rights situation, and to propose recommendations for the future. The 'white book' is currently being finalised.

### **Lobbying in relation to Brussels**

The EMHRN's presence and participation in the Barcelona process was consolidated in November, 1999, when it organised a training seminar on the 'Human Rights Dimension of the Barcelona Process' in Brussels, November 8-11, 1999, with the assistance of Jeunesse Maghrebine, Brussels-based member of the EMHRN.

The seminar included an introduction to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, debates about the institutions of the EU, the MEDA Democracy Programme as well as key human rights aspects of the Barcelona process. It brought around fifty human rights defenders to Brussels and actively involved high level representatives of the EU institutions, the Commission, the Council and the Parliament, as well as ambassadors of the EMP.

As a part of the training seminar, the EMHRN organised a one-day reflection seminar on the implementation of the human rights clause of the EU association agreements in the European Parliament, which was sponsored by the five major political groups of the EP, and in which MEPs took part together with representatives of the major international human rights organisations. The proceedings of the Reflection seminar were published in April, 2000, as a contribution to the development of a strong human rights mechanism on the basis of the human rights clauses.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the debates of the training seminar fed into another key publication of the EMHRN:

---

<sup>6</sup>Amnesty International, Article 19, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies; European Council for Refugees and Exiles, Human Rights Watch, Penal Reform International, Reporters sans Frontières, and the World Organisation against Torture.

<sup>7</sup>The Role of Human Rights in the EU's Policy: Setting Article 2 in Motion.

### **Guide to human rights in the Barcelona process**

In April, 2000, the EMHRN launched the French version of its Guide to Human Rights in the Barcelona process at a meeting in the EP building in Paris in which MEPs took part as well as representatives of French human rights organisations. Written by Khemais Chammari and Caroline Stainier, the Guide is a pioneering work in relation to the Barcelona process and has been in great demand since then, including several EU delegations. An up-dated English version was published in October and the Arabic version is forthcoming.

The aim of the guide is to explain “who is doing what and how” within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It describes the procedures and the institutions within the Partnership, such as the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Two other chapters deal with the structure and the functioning of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and the financing of human rights and democracy projects. Finally, the Guide contains a section with contact addresses and key documents of the Partnership.

The guide is addressed to members and co-ordinators of networks and movements, who work for the promotion and protection of human rights within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and for the active participation of civil society in its development.

### **The Association Agreements between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners**

In continuation of its work on the development of EMP human rights mechanisms, the EMHRN has participated in general campaigns to put human rights on the agenda of the Association Council meetings between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners.

In preparation for the Second Association Council meeting between the EU and Tunisia, scheduled for 16 November, 1999, EMHRN representatives had several meetings with representatives of the Finnish Presidency of the EU. During these meetings, EMHRN concerns about the situation in the country were tabled. Contacts were also taken to the Swedish, and French governments.

A week before the Association Council meeting, the EMHRN issued two reports on Tunisia, one on the trials against Radhia Nassraoui and twenty co-defendants in Summer, 1999, and one on the situation of civil liberties in Tunisia.

Finally, the organisation of the training seminar in Brussels in early November and the reflection seminar in the European Parliament had a not inconsiderable affect on the outcome of the Association Council meeting. During the training seminar it was announced that the meeting was postponed and would take place during the Portuguese Presidency of the EU.

Shortly before the first Association Council between Israel and the EU, the EMHRN organised a workshop in continuation of the LAW conference on Jerusalem where members and partners of the EMHRN were invited to

formulate recommendations for the Association Council meeting. The meeting, however, was organised with too short notice to produce the expected outcome. A report from the workshop is currently being finalised.

In October 2000, the EMHRN published a declaration on the occasion of the first Association Council between Morocco and the EU, in which progress and major problems relating to the human rights situation were high-lighted, including concerns about the increase of racist incidents in the EU with regard to Moroccan migrants. The declaration was forwarded to all the relevant EMP institutions.

In Summer, 2000, the EMHRN facilitated financial support for the English translation of the IHD report on its Legislative Screening of Turkish legislation relevant to Turkey's compliance with the Copenhagen Political Criteria for adherence to the EU.

It funded a mission of IHD composed of Akin Birdal, Hüsnü Urgül and Nazmi Gür to Brussels to meet representatives of the EU institutions and present their report. The meetings and a press conference were organised by FIDH representatives in Brussels and were widely publicised in Turkey.

### **The MEDA Democracy Programme**

Since the time it was set up, the EMHRN has followed the development of the MEDA Democracy Programme with great concern. From the outset, the management of the MDP has suffered from the institutional crisis of the EU which peaked with the departure of the Santer Commission in 1999.

In June, 1999, the Lebanese NGO Forum was disregarded by the Commission in relation to the funding initiatives in Lebanon. According to both the Lebanese NGO Forum and the EMHRN, the procedures chosen by the Commission were not transparent and were disrespectful of spirit of the Barcelona process, which calls for dialogue and partnership and for funds to be directed towards South NGOs rather than EU based agencies. On behalf of the Lebanese NGO Forum, representatives of the EMHRN met with the Commission in October 1999 in order to express their concern about the handling of grants in Lebanon. The EMHRN furthermore invited a representative of the Lebanese NGO Forum to attend the training seminar in Brussels in order to allow meetings to take place with relevant representatives of the Commission. Finally, the EMHRN addressed a letter to Commissioner Patten in January, 2000, expressing its support for the Lebanese NGO Forum and the EMHRN's willingness to bring in the expertise of its members for the benefit of the management of human rights funds.

In Spring, 2000, the EMHRN contacted the Commission several times on behalf of members in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel to further the release of funds for projects approved in 1998; from Spring until the funds were released in September 2000, it monitored the handling of projects approved in 1999 by the Commission for human rights NGOs in Israel, including B'tselem.

Aware that, since the Prodi Cabinet was set up, the Commission has been undergoing a process of reforming grant management procedures under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, the EMHRN contacted the members in the first half of 2000 to communicate their experience with the MDP. On this basis, a set of recommendations was established which were circulated among all members for comments.

Thereafter, the recommendations were forwarded to all relevant representatives of EMP institutions and have, according to various sources, become a document of reference. Following its publication, the EMHRN was invited to Brussels by representatives of the EU Commission in June, 2000, where it had the occasion to promote EMHRN positions further.

In parallel to this work, the EMHRN has supported the advocacy campaigns of Brussels-based NGOs, aimed at ensuring greater transparency in the EU's management of human rights funds in relation to the ongoing restructuring of the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights and to ensure that the prime beneficiaries of the funds are NGOs in the South and East Mediterranean region.

### **EU Human Rights Discussion Forum**

In November 1999, the first EU Annual Report on Human Rights was published under the Finnish Presidency of the EU. Although criticized for a number of shortcomings the publication was welcomed as a positive step towards the development of EU policy in the human rights field. On 30 November and 1 December, 1999, the report was discussed at a Discussion Forum meeting in Brussels between representatives of governments, the EU institutions, academics and NGOs, a meeting which was highly welcomed by all parties. The dialogue was followed-up by a second forum in Venice in May, 2000, under the Portuguese Presidency, and is about to be institutionalised. The EMHRN is a regular participant at these biannual consultations.

### **EMHRN Brussels office**

During the past period the EC has discussed the feasibility of opening an office in Brussels in relation to format and timing. In Paris, April 2000, it was decided to open an antenna of the secretariat in Brussels in order to strengthen the role of the EMHRN as an interface between its members and the EMP institutions. Upon release of the latest EU grant, the EMHRN announced a job vacancy for a post in Brussels. Out of 17 applicants, five were chosen for job interviews that took place in Paris on September 7, 2000. Details are at present being finalised in order for the opening of a representation in December 2000/ January 2001.

### **Dialogue with governments**

In the past period, the The EMHRN has systematically fed governments and ambassadors of the EMP with reports, press releases and news from the region. Similar information has been addressed to the EU delegations, EU Parliamentarians and key representatives of the Commission and the European Council through documentation. The EMHRN has also been represented at key conferences on Euro-Mediterranean issues in the period covered by this report.

Representatives of the Finnish, French, Jordanian and Moroccan governments gave presentations at the EMHRN training seminar in Brussels, and all Representations to the EU of the 27 partner countries were invited to attend the Reflection Seminar in the European Parliament.

A special dialogue has taken place with the Jordanian government, and meetings have been organised with representatives of the Egyptian government and the Palestinian Authorities (see below).

In order to try to initiate dialogue with the Syrian and Algerian governments letters have been addressed to the authorities asking for permission to hold an EC meeting in these countries (see below).

Official demarches have been taken vis-à-vis the Human Rights Commission of the Arab League in order to obtain consultative status. The request has been received positively, but is still awaiting final decisions.

In relation to the EU governments, the EMHRN has had meetings with the representatives of the Finnish, French and Swedish governments. Further meetings have been organised with representatives of the Austrian, British and Dutch Foreign Offices.

In order to strengthen contacts with EMP governments, the EC decided in Amman that future EC meetings should take place in EU countries with the presidency of the EU upcoming, while a third annual EC meeting should aim to take place in a South Mediterranean country.

A major initiative has been initiated with the Swedish, Danish and Finnish governments on the organisation a conference on Access to Justice in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The conference will be part of the official programme of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and will focus on identifying various weaknesses in judicial systems in the region while at the same time identifying strong elements and best practices. The aim of the conference is

- \* to reach an understanding of common standards, changes and reforms needed in this field and feed this into future Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial meetings,
- \* to reinvigorate human rights dialogue within the official programme of the EMP
- \* to establish/ strengthen dialogue between civil society and governments on human rights issues

The conference is expected to take place on 26-28 April, 2001, at the University of Uppsala. The EMHRN has been asked to act as consultants in relation to the programme and the relevant participants. The Law Faculty of the University of Uppsala will be the convening body.

### **The non-dialogue with Tunisia**

In the past year, EMHRN activities have been aggressively monitored by envoys of the Tunisian authorities in a way it has not experienced elsewhere.

Organisations such as: Association des Mères Tunisiennes; Association de Défense des Tunisiens à l'Étranger; Avocats sans Frontières; Jeunes Médecins Sans Frontières; Ligue Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des Peuples; N.E.A.P.O.L.I.S; Trait d'Union - Association Franco-Tunisienne de Seine Saint Denis; and Union National des Femmes Tunisiennes have sought to intrude in the meetings arranged or co-organised by the EMHRN, or have sent letters (without addressee) protesting against EMHRN activities.

Three representatives of Tunisian GONGOs tried to spoil the proceedings of the Civil Forum in Stuttgart, April, 1999; five representatives tried the same at the launch of the Guide to Human Rights in the EP Building in Paris, April, 2000.

Numerous persons tried to interfere during the training seminar in Brussels, 8-11 November. On this occasion lists of participants and conference documents were stolen. Unknown persons succeeded in getting hold of the list of EMHRN guests at the conference hotels and Mr. Khémaïss Chammari, an individual member of the EMHRN and well known human rights activist and opponent to the Tunisian regime had his address book and a his keys stolen from his hotel room in Brussels.

After the seminar, the Tunisian government complained officially to the EU Commission and Council about the seminar for being selective and because EU representatives took part in the proceedings.

During the Conference 'From Stuttgart to Marseille', Stuttgart 20-22 October, 2000, 9 representatives of Tunisian government interests made their presence felt.

### **NGO and civil society co-operation**

During the past period, the EMHRN has developed co-operation with a range of Partners.

It is now regularly involved in co-ordinating joint actions with the major international human rights NGOs, as several paragraphs of this report will show, and it has or is developing alliances with a range of partners which are listed below. In all, besides co-operation with its regular members, the EMHRN has worked with the following organisations in organising concrete actions and events:

Amnesty International, Arab Initiative for Freedom of Association, Article 19, Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, Bunian Programme, Committee to Protect Journalists, Freedom of Expression Forum, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, German Mediterranean Forum, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Human Rights Watch, ICJ-Denmark, ICJ-Sweden, IFEX, International Coalition for a Criminal Court, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), International Press Institute, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights; Minority Rights Group, Norwegian Bar Association; Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders; Penal Reform International, Reporters sans Frontières, Sorros Foundation, World Organisation against Torture, and several others.

## **Annual report**

In the last report of activities, an outline of the annual report was presented which aimed at including a series of thematic articles relating to key human rights issues within the framework of the Barcelona process.

When conceived in the 1997 EMHRN project proposal to the EU, the idea was to base the report on the active participation of the members. Subsequently, a number of members were contacted in Spring, 1999, and invited to contribute to the report. The invitations were positively met but only few contributions were finalised and it became clear that members' time constraints and workload did not allow things to proceed in the way originally planned.

Therefore the EMHRN addressed a letter to the Commission in June, 1999, to ask for a restructuring of the budget lines for the annual report, in order to allow the EMHRN to cover author fees. The EMHRN did not receive a reply until January, 2000, when it was no longer clear to what degree an annual report of the kind first imagined should be a priority activity of the EMHRN. Regrettably this part of the first contract was not implemented.

## **B. CAPACITY BUILDING AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**

\* In January, 2000, the EMHRN launched the English and French versions of its website on [www.euromedrights.net](http://www.euromedrights.net) in order to strengthen the capacity of EMHRN members to work on human rights within the framework of the Barcelona process.

The website contains basic information about the EMHRN, including its documents, reports, and press releases. It also includes links to the member organisations, international human rights organisations, the EMP institutions and the United Nations. It also contains documents relevant to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and to civil society activities within the framework of the Barcelona process. Finally, it contains a calendar and a news page. The development of the web site is highly dependent on information received from the members and is also fed with information gathered by the secretariat.

---

A weekly notice about news on the web site is forwarded by mail to subscribers. In its present form the news service is conceived in a such as way as to avoid overloading subscribers with information and to guide them towards the places where further information can be obtained.

The creation of this information service has helped increase public awareness of the EMHRN and the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process. Since January 2000, 550 subscribers have been receiving the weekly news, including EMHRN members, other NGOs, representatives of the EU and EMP institutions, other decision makers, the press and interested individuals.

Funds have been secured for the launch of the Arabic version of the Web site in April, 2001.

\* 28-30 April, 2000, a first workshop or 'sub network meeting' was organised within the framework of the EMHRN. A well-articulated proposal has existed

since the second General Assembly in Copenhagen on how the EMHRN should move forward in the field of human rights education (HRE). At the General Assembly in Stuttgart, it was recommended that the EMHRN create a task group to audit the experience of human rights education within the Network's membership, and to develop a policy paper on education for discussion and endorsement by next year's assembly.

A grant from Cordaid made it possible to organise a workshop on HRE in Bray, Ireland in April, 2000, upon invitation from 80:20 Education for a Better World. Funding was allowed for a limited number of participants who were identified according to their participation in previous AGM HRE workshops.

Based on an exchange of experience from their work, participants from 80:20 Education for a Better World, Ireland; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK; CIHRS, Egypt; Arab Institute for Human Rights, Tunisia; and the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights, Lebanon, agreed on a draft policy paper to be submitted for discussion and approval at the AGM in Marseille. The paper includes an introduction to the role of human rights education within human rights; human rights in the context of the Euro-Med; HRE in an educational context; a definition of HRE; a proposal for an HRE agenda of the EMHRN and for integrating HRE in the EMHRN's approach.

Furthermore, the paper outlines a strategy for the EMHRN including: (a) a research project on current HRE practices and methodologies in the Euro-Med; (b) a summer school for human rights educators; (c) exchange and translation of manuals and other literature; (d) developing a web site on HRE; (e) strengthening the presentation of the EMHRN and its messages; (f) publishing a book with cartoons on human rights issues in the Euro-Med.

\* In August, 2000, the EMHRN supported the holding of a Summer School on human rights for Algerian university youth organised by the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (see below).

\* In October, 2000, the EMHRN financially supported the participation of EMHRN members in the Cairo Conference on Human rights education and dissemination: 21st Century Agenda (organised by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies). The conference was a follow-up to the First International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World that was successfully arranged by the CIHRS in co-operation with the Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights in April 1999. Among the issues discussed were the role of the media and art in HRE; the contribution of NGOs and governments to the field; the impact of dominant political culture and of religion on HRE. A report from the conference is forthcoming.

\* The EMHRN has recommended to the Danish Centre for Human Rights that members of the Network attend the DCHR's bi-annual training courses on human rights. In the past period, representatives of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, the Beirut Bar Association, the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon, LAW, Palestine, and the Moroccan

Organisation for Human Rights have attended the training courses.

### **C. WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

In July, 2000, a proposal entitled a Plan of action for a Euro-Mediterranean Committee for Women's Rights was drafted as a follow-up to the workshop on women's rights at the AGM in Stuttgart to promote debate on the question within the membership base. The draft was circulated to the participants of the women's rights workshop, and to participants at the Stuttgart Civil Forum, who expressed an interest in working on the issue. However, only few responded to the draft.

At the training seminar in Brussels an informal meeting was organised for the participants with the aim of broadening the circle of people interested in promoting women's rights in a EuroMed context.

The participants agreed that there is a need to strengthen the women's rights aspect of the Barcelona process.

Several participants proposed establishing a working group on women's rights under the umbrella of the EMHRN, while others felt that the main challenge lies in integrating women's rights issues into all human rights activities and not confining them to a separate sphere. It was eventually agreed that the first step should be to identify ongoing activities in the region and to identify existing networks and organisations working in the field of women's rights in the EuroMed region.

At the beginning of the year 2000, the Regional Council in Marseille proved willing to support a conference on women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region in preparation for the Civil Forum in Marseille. At the EC meeting in Amman, the question of women's rights was high on the agenda, and at the Paris meeting it was decided to give financial priority to the holding of the conference in co-operation with FIDH and the French Human Rights League.

On 5-7 July, 2000, a preparatory meeting was held in Marseille in order to settle the outline of the Conference.<sup>8</sup> The following themes were adopted: Forms of violence against women ('legal violence'; violence by state and non-state actors, and socio-economic violence); women rights in the Barcelona process; international instruments for the protection of women's rights; strategies for inscribing equality into the Barcelona Process and for reinforcing the capacity of NGOs to influence and benefit from the Barcelona Process.

---

<sup>8</sup>The following took part in the preparatory meeting Nouria Ouali, ULB, Belgium; Roseline Tiset and Alain Fourest, LDH, France; Sa'eda Kilani, Arab Archives, Jordan; Tanian Helou, Lebanese NGO Forum, Lebanon; Rabea Naciri, ADFM, Morocco; Alya Chammari, Collectif Maghreb Egalité, Tunisia; Bochra Bel Hadj Hmida, ATFD, Tunisia; Donatella Rovera, AI; Dalila Romdhane, PRI; Odile Sidem-Poulain and Sara Guillet, FIDH; Driss El Yazami, FIDH and EMHRN; Kamel Jendoubi and Marc Schade-Poulsen, EMHRN. The steering committee was later enlarged with Souad Sadate, Aïda Seif El Dawla Rana Hosseini Zoya Rouhana, Sama Oweida Liftawi and Gunzeli Kaya..

The conference preparations were co-ordinated by FIDH, and were more or less finalised when the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories made it necessary to postpone the conference to Spring, 2001.

#### **D. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND EXPRESSION**

\* Freedom of association is a priority of the EMHRN and considered a prerequisite for civil society participation in the Barcelona process. Therefore, in the past period, the EMHRN has followed the developments closely in a number of EMP countries, as the country sections below will show.

At the third general assembly of the EMHRN, it was recommended that a seminar in Morocco be organised on this issue, with the objective of establishing a common platform and work programme for independent NGOs in the region.

In early Spring 2000, contacts were made with the Arab Initiative for Freedom of Association, and it was agreed that synergy could be reached through joint efforts. In March, representatives of the EC and the secretariat met with the representatives of the Moroccan EMHRN members, and it was found feasible to organise a seminar on Freedom of Association in the Euro-Mediterranean Region in Morocco

A steering committee was identified composed of members of the EMHRN Executive Committee, initiators of the AIFA and Association démocratique des femmes marocaines, Espace Associatif, and Organisation marocaine des droits de l'Homme.

At a meeting in Rabat, 16-17 June, 2000, the Steering Committee met<sup>9</sup> and agreed on criteria for invitations, the outline of the seminar programme and objectives of the seminar which were to

\* situate the question of freedom of association in a Euro-Mediterranean context and to review the current state of affairs in the light of the democratic principles and criteria that should guide legislation with respect to freedom of association.

\* adopt a work programme and identify the means for promoting freedom of association in the context of the Barcelona process in synergy with ongoing initiatives, in particular the Action Plan and Declaration of Freedom of Association of Amman.

It was also decided to hold the meeting in early October, shortly before a new law on associations was discussed in the Moroccan Parliament.

The seminar was organised by the EMHRN and the Moroccan EMHRN member organisations and took place on 5-7 October, 2000, with the financial support of

---

<sup>9</sup>Ghassan Moukheiber (ADDL, AIFA), Fadhel Ghedamsi (LTDH), Khader Shkirat (EMHRN, AIFA and LAW), Kamal Lahbib (Espace Associatif), Mohammed Al Ahyane (OMDH), Bahey El Din Hassan (EMHRN and CIHRS), Leïla Rhiwi (ADFM), Uli Vogt (AIFA and BUNIAN Program), Mohammed Mouaqit (OMDH), Abdelaziz Bennani (EMHRN), Rachid Filali (Espace Associatif and AIFA) and Marc Schade-Poulsen (EMHRN).

the EMHRN and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Conference participation was seriously influenced by the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but the participants succeeded in adopting a Declaration and an outline for a work programme<sup>10</sup> and as such, a platform upon which the EMHRN can build its future strategy within the framework of the Barcelona process.

\* In the past period, the EMHRN has sought to investigate possibilities for organising a Euro-Mediterranean seminar on freedom of expression as a first step towards establishing a common platform in this field.

The EMHRN was present at two seminars in Amman, "Media and Democracy in the Arab World", 3-4 February, and "Freedom of Expression and the Media in Jordan", 5 February, organised by the International Press Institute (IPI) during which contacts were established with IFEX members.

However, links strong enough to promote synergy between the EMHRN and other initiatives have not yet been created.

Finally, the EMHRN has closely followed the situation of the press in Jordan (see below).

## **E. COUNTRY REPORTS, INCLUDING HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS**

A great deal of EMHRN activities have been devoted to solidarity actions in relation to a regrettably high number of cases in the region where human rights are under attack. EMHRN activities in these fields are best rendered by a country to country approach.

### **Algeria**

In Algeria the main actions of the EMHRN have primarily concentrated on assisting member organisations and partners in building their capacity to promote and protect human rights in a country still torn by conflict.

\* In April 1999, the EMHRN acted as intermediary in organising a visit of the Collectif des Familles des Disparus in Denmark, during which it met with representatives of the Danish Government and Parliament. The EMHRN furthermore facilitated a project proposal on behalf of the Collectif, aimed at establishing a structure in Algeria to help families of the disappeared to defend their rights. The proposal is expected to be positively met in the near future.

\* From August 20-30, 2000, the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights organised a Summer University in Tizirt-Sur-Mer with the support of the EMHRN. Between 45 and 60 persons, mainly students from the universities of Tizi-Ouzou, Bejaia, Setif, Bordj-Bou-Areridj, Bouira and Boumerdes, attended the course, which lasted ten days.

<sup>10</sup>General Declaration, Euro-Mediterranean Seminar on the Freedom of Association, Casablanca, 5, 6 and 7 October, 2000.

Experts and human rights activists gave lectures on the relation between universality and cultural specificity; human rights and structural adjustment; globalization and economic and social rights; constitutionalism, democratic culture and rule of law; the media and human rights; corruption and globalization; and human rights in the Barcelona process. The seminar was an occasion for numerous debates among the youth present. It was welcomed by the heads of the local and regional council and publicised in the local press (a report from the seminar is available at the EMHRN secretariat).

\* Finally, in December, 1999, the EMHRN forwarded a letter to the Algerian President asking for authorization to hold a meeting of the EC in Algeria with the aim of strengthening relations between the EMHRN and Algerian civil society, and to engage in dialogue with authorities. Despite the fact that unofficial sources said that the request would be positively met, the EMHRN has not received an answer to its request.

## **Egypt**

In May, 1999, as the EMHRN was about to release a report from its mission to Egypt in early 1999 (see report from Stuttgart) news was received that the People's Assembly was about to adopt a new repressive Law on Civil Associations and Institutions

An urgent mission was sent to Egypt (in co-operation with FIDH) that met with high level representatives of the Egyptian authorities and with Egyptian NGOs. A preliminary report from the mission was presented to Mary Robinson at a meeting in June, 1999, before she left for a visit to Egypt.

The mission's final report was published in August, 1999. It expressed deep concern about the deterioration of the human rights situation in Egypt, and urged the EU institutions to take concrete steps in order to get the law repealed. Furthermore, members of the EMHRN were contacted during the summer, 1999, and asked to write to the Egyptian Minister of Social Affairs, urging her to reconsider the law.

In Autumn, 1999, EMHRN concern over the situation in Egypt was voiced at meetings with Troika representatives in Brussels. Two representatives of the Egyptian human rights movement, Hafez Abou Sa'eda, Secretary General of the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights and Gasser Abderrazak, Hishem Moubarak Centre, were invited to speak about the situation in Egypt at the reflection seminar in the European Parliament.

\* In February, 2000, the EMHRN took part in the campaign on behalf of Hafez Abou Sa'eda in relation to the arrest order that was issued against him, charging him, under military decree, with accepting a cheque from the British embassy in 1998 without giving required notification to the authorities.

On 15 February, 2000, a statement was issued in co-operation with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, The International Federation of Human Rights, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the Observatory for the Protection

of Human Rights Defenders and the World Organisation against Torture, condemning the prosecution of Hafez Abou Sa'eda.

Funds were provided in order to contribute to covering the costs relating to Hafez Abou Sa'eda's travel to Europe; a letter was sent to the Egyptian Ambassador in Brussels, asking for a meeting about Hafez Abou Sa'eda; and an EMHRN representative met with the Public Prosecutor in Cairo and representatives of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and the British Embassy.

\* On June 5, 2000, the EMHRN addressed a letter to the EU delegation in Cairo concerning the participation of only one human rights NGO at a Round Table meeting in Cairo, assessing the Egyptian NGOs experience with the EU.

\* On 27 June, EMHRN representatives met with the Egyptian Ambassador in Brussels in order to explore possibilities for dialogue.

\* In July and August, 2000, the EMHRN protested against renewed attacks on Egyptian civil society, this time the arrest of Sa'ad Ed Din Ibrahim. Letters sent jointly to the EU governments with the above mentioned partners. Furthermore, a joint letter was co-ordinated, protesting against the silence of the EU with regard to Saad Ed Din Ibrahim's arrest.

### **Jordan and Lebanon**

Following the publication of the report by Sa'eda Kilani on the 1998 Press and Publications Law, entitled Black Year for Democracy in Jordan, and the ensuing lobbying activity in the European Parliament in November 1998, the Jordanian Ambassador in Bonn paid a visit to the Danish Centre for Human Rights in order to present his government's objections to the report. At the end of the meeting, the ambassador extended an official invitation to the EMHRN to visit Jordan and to continue dialogue on the situation on freedom of the press.

The Executive Committee accepted the invitation and a visit to Jordan was organised in January, 2000.

In the meantime on 13 August, 1999, the EMHRN issued a joint statement in co-operation with Article 19, the Arab Archives Institute for Publishing, Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, Committee to Protect Journalists, International Federation of Human Rights, International Federation of Journalists, International Press Institute, Reporters sans Frontières, and World Association of Newspapers. The statement was sent to the Jordanian parliamentarians on the occasion of a parliamentary discussion of amendments to the Press law of 1998, urging them to ensure that the amended Press and Publications Law respects constitutional and international guarantees of freedom of expression.

In January, 2000, the EMHRN delegation had meetings with representatives of Jordanian human rights NGOs, the press, representatives of the Jordanian Press Association, the Speakers of the Lower House and the Senate, the Secretary General of the Press and Publications Department, and Prime Minister Rawabdeh.

The meetings were conducted in an open atmosphere; particularly promising was Prime Minister Rawabdeh's commitment to have his government publish international covenants and treaties ratified by Jordan in the Official Gazette, as a first step towards bringing national legislation into line with Jordan's international commitments.

At the end of the visit, the parties agreed to continue the dialogue. Subsequently, the EMHRN asked Ms Sa'eda Kilani to write a new comprehensive report on press freedoms in the country from which further dialogue would follow. The report is currently being finalised.

\* Before the dialogue meetings, the EMHRN held an EC meeting in Amman, 19-20 January with the invaluable support of Sa'eda Kilani, individual member of the EMHRN, and Hani Hourani, director of Al Urdun Al Jedid Research Centre. The meeting was an occasion for encounters with several representatives of Jordanian human rights NGOs.

\* From September 18-25 the EMHRN sent a mission to Lebanon and Jordan with the mandate to: 1. Evaluate the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan in the light of international standards for human rights and refugee protection; 2. Compare the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan with the situation of other refugee groups and with the situation of 'ordinary' citizens  
3. Examine whether changes in the policy of the EU countries over the past five years had had an impact on the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Palestine. A report from the mission is currently being finalised.

In the past period, the EMHRN has closely followed EU Commission management of human rights grants to Lebanese NGOs (see above).

### **Morocco**

On October 5-7, 2000, the EMHRN, Association démocratique des femmes marocaine, Espace Associatif and the Moroccan Organisation for Human Rights jointly organised a seminar on freedom of association (see above) shortly before the Moroccan Parliament was about to adopt a new law on associations.

\* On October 7, 2000, the EMHRN published a declaration on the occasion of the first Association Council meeting between the EU and Morocco, welcoming progress with regard to the human rights situation in Morocco while expressing concern that the situation still needs to be redressed in numerous fields, and concern about racist incidents against Moroccans in the EU countries.

### **Palestine**

\* Following the recommendations of the third general assembly, the EMHRN forwarded a letter to the governments of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in support of the campaign of Palestinian human rights NGOs for convening the conference of the High Contracting Parties of the Fourth Geneva Convention on July 15, 1999. It also urged members to support their Palestinian colleagues by forwarding similar letters to national governments.

\* In June 1999, two and a half weeks after the People's Assembly in Egypt adopted a the new repressive law on associations, the EMHRN was informed that a campaign was running against Palestinian human rights organisations, seeking to slander their reputation. The campaign appeared to be part of efforts to undermine a new law on associations which had been passed through the Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) three times and was viewed as an achievement by Palestinian NGOs.

Therefore, the EMHRN sent a mission to Palestine, July 31 to August 2, 1999, with the mandate to inquire into the pending law on NGOs and the recent attacks on human rights organisations. The mission was organised in close co-ordination with LAW and The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, and met with NGO representatives, members of the PLC and the Ministers of Justice and of NGOs. The mission gave rise to a number of constructive dialogues. However, the EMHRN deeply regrets that a report was not issued following the visit, due to a shortage of capacity.

\* On 8 August, the EMHRN sent a letter to President Arafat following the summoning of Dr. Eyad El Sarraj by the Palestinian Police upon publication of an article criticising Arafat for not ratifying the new NGO law adopted by the Legislative Council. The EMHRN asked the President to revoke the order of the Palestinian Police, prohibiting Dr. Sarraj from leaving the country.

\* The previous initiatives were followed up when EMHRN sent a mission to Palestine to attend the hearing on 11 October, 1999, in the Ramallah Magistrate Court in the case filed by LAW against the chief editor of "Al-Hayat al-Jadidah" newspaper and two lawyers accusing them of defamation. The hearing was postponed as the judge responsible for the case had been transferred to another court, and a new judge appointed overnight. After agreement between LAW and the newspaper, the defendants withdrew their accusations and LAW dropped the case.

\* On May 17, 2000, the EMHRN sent a letter to the head of the Palestinian Bar Association, the Palestinian Minister of Justice and President Arafat expressing its concern that all lawyers at the PCHR, including Mr Raji Sourani, Director of the PCHR, had been removed from the Bar Association's list of practising lawyers on the basis of a restrictive interpretation of the Palestinian Bar Association Law (article 7) which prohibits lawyers from the practice of law combined with the holding of public or private employment; it also expressed concern that Mr. Khader Shkirat, Director of LAW, was threatened by the Deputy Head of the Bar Council to stop his critique of the Bar.

\* On 5-7 June, 2000, the EMHRN representatives<sup>1</sup> attended the LAW conference on Culture, Community and Jerusalem. During the conference the EMHRN chaired a panel on the impact of the Barcelona process on human rights in Palestine and the Peace Process. Furthermore, on 8 June, 2000, a workshop

---

<sup>1</sup>Kamel Jendoubi and Marit Floe Joergensen.

was organised (as a follow-up of the panel at the LAW Conference) with the aim of discussing whether the Barcelona Process had contributed to a human rights approach to the Peace Process. The objective was also to make recommendations to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on how such an approach could be strengthened; and to reflect on recommendations in relation to the first Association Council meeting between the EU and Israel. The participants were the same as at the panel at the LAW conference. They included representatives from Human Rights Watch; LAW; Palestinian Centre for Human Rights; FIDH; World Organisation Against Torture; Arab Association for Human Rights in Nazareth; Human Rights Association of Turkey; Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity; the MATTIN group, Palestine; and the University of Ulster, Northern Ireland. A report from the workshop is being prepared.

\* From 4-8 October, 2000, the EMHRN sent a mission to Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories in co-operation with FIDH and ICJ-Sweden,<sup>12</sup> with the mandate to evaluate the current crisis and the parties' handling of the situation in the light of international human rights standards, including the provisions of the Barcelona Declaration in the field of human rights and the Association Agreements.

In carrying out the mission, the team liaised closely with local EMHRN and FIDH members, together with other human rights and humanitarian organisations working throughout the affected areas of Northern Israel, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The statement following the mission heavily criticised the widespread and sustained abuses of human rights combined with a failure to adhere to international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, as required by the provisions of the Barcelona Declaration and related Association Agreements.

The mission statement was followed up with a letter from the EMHRN to the EU governments, urging the EU to act firmly upon its commitment to base its Mediterranean policy on the respect for human rights and to:

- \* support an urgent international, independent commission of inquiry to Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territories, to carry out a thorough and comprehensive investigation into the events during the current crisis, and of alleged abuses of human rights and breaches of humanitarian law
- \* ensure that efficient and appropriate measures are taken to stop human rights abuses, and to bring perpetrators to justice
- \* call for an extraordinary Association Council between the EU and Israel
- \* take the initiative of reconvening the High Contracting Parties to the adjourned

<sup>12</sup>Iain Byrne, Researcher at the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK; Stefan August Lutgenau, Coordinator, Bruno Kreisky Foundation, Austria; Hubert Prévot, President of Coordination Sud, France, on behalf of the EMHRN and the FIDH and Per Erik Nilsson, former judge and Ombudsman on behalf of the International Committee of Jurists, Sweden.

conference and pressure Israel to implement de jure the 4th Geneva Convention

### **Syria**

On 19 July, 1999, following an exchange of letters between the EMHRN and representatives of the Syrian government (see last Annual report), the EMHRN sent a letter to the Syrian authorities asking for authorisation to hold the next EC meeting in Syria. On 15 August, 1999, the EMHRN received a reply from the Syrian embassies in Cairo and Bonn stating that although it was not possible for the time being to convene in Syria, the request had been given "great appreciation and interest".

Since this period, the EMHRN has kept in regular contact with Aktham Naisse, now formally President of the CDF in Syria, in order to monitor the impact that EMHRN initiatives have had on the situation of human rights defenders in Syria. Slightly encouraged by the exchange of letters with the Syrian authorities, the EMHRN sent a mission to Damascus in January. The mission was allowed into Syria and met with CDF representatives without any interference from the Syrian authorities. It was briefed about the situation of human rights defenders in the country and discussed how the EMHRN could contribute to progress in the field of human rights. At the EC meeting in Paris in April, 2000, Aktham Naisse was adopted as an individual member of the EMHRN. Shortly beforehand, a letter was addressed to the Syrian authorities asking to extend dialogue with the EMHRN and expressing concern about the health situation of Aktham Naisse.

A new mission was sent to Damascus in June, 2000, in order to extend support to the human rights defenders in Syria and to discuss further how the EMHRN could contribute to the CDF's work. Again the mission was allowed to meet with its member colleagues, who shortly thereafter were able to hold the first general assembly of the CDF for years and to elect Aktham Naisse as its President.

### **Tunisia**

The EMHRN has closely followed the situation in Tunisia during the past period.

In March, 1999, the EMHRN co-organised a round-trip for two members of the Tunisian League to Denmark, Sweden, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, where they met with the representatives of governments, funding agencies and EU institutions.

On June 7, 1999, the EMHRN wrote a letter to the Tunisian Minister of the Interior and requested an urgent meeting about the situation of Moncef Marzouki and the CNLT following the arrest of Mr Moncef Marzouki on his way to a ceremony commemorating the death of Nabil Barakat, who died under torture in 1987. Dr. Marzouki was charged by the examining magistrate with establishing and running an unrecognised organisation, disseminating information disturbing public order and propagating false news. He was released in the afternoon and ordered not to leave Tunisia.

On May 15, Hans Kjellund, individual member of the Network, attended the trial in Tunis, against Ms Radhia Nasraoui, lawyer and human rights defender, and

her twenty co-defendants who were accused of links with an unauthorised association and participation in unauthorised meetings with the aim of inciting hatred. Mohammed Tahri was also appointed to attend the trial by the EMHRN in collaboration with FIDH.

The trial was postponed to June 19, 1999, where Mr Dimitris Kaltsonis, of the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity, represented the EMHRN. The night before the trial, Ms Radhia Nasraoui gave birth to a baby daughter and the trial was postponed again to July 10, 1999, and again monitored by Mr. Kaltsonis. The appeal process on August 6 was attended by Mr Mohammed Anik, Moroccan lawyer and member of the Organisation marocaine des droits de l'Homme, on behalf of the EMHRN. The report from the mission was released in November, 1999, shortly before the Association Council meeting between the EU and Tunisia.

On 4 August, 1999, the EMHRN sent a letter to the Tunisian Minister of the Interior, asking for authorisation to send a mission of inquiry to Tunisia to look into the situation of human rights defenders and of Mr. Abderraouf Chammari, who was arrested on 5 July, 1999, charged with 'defamation of the authorities and diffusing false news'. Abderraouf Chammari, who is the brother of Khémairis Chammari, member of the EMHRN, was released on 31 August on humanitarian grounds.

In Autumn, 1999, the EMHHRN had several meetings with EU representatives in order to express its concern about the situation in Tunisia and urge the EU to address the human rights violations in Tunisia at the second Association Council meeting.

In preparation for the meeting, the EMHRN issued a report entitled the State of Liberties and Human Rights in Tunisia, in addition to the report on the trial against Radhia Nassraoui.

In Spring, 2000, the EMHRN took part in the international solidarity campaign for the Tunisian human rights defenders that was sparked off by journalist Taoufik Ben Brik's hunger strike.

On 27 April, 2000, the EMHRN forwarded an open letter to President Ben Ali, concerning Taoufik Ben Brik's state of health.

On 12 May, 2000, the EMHRN, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), and Reporters without Borders (RSF) called upon the EU institutions to clearly condemn the systematic intimidation and harassment of human rights defenders and their family, as well as independent human rights organizations.

On 15 May, 2000, the EMHRN was present at the trial of Jalal Zoughlami, brother of Taoufik Ben Brik. He was charged with 'unacceptable behaviour' according to the decree of 25 April, 1940, in the Tunisian Penal Code and with 'aggression and violence against a policeman on duty'.

On the World day Against Torture, 23 June, 2000, the EMHRN co-published a report by Khémamis Ksila, Vice-President of the LTDH on 'The Tunisians Prisons seen from within', with FIDH and the CRLDHT.

On August 4, 2000, it issued an open letter to President Ben Ali protesting against the sacking of Marzouki from his job.

On 26 October, the EMHRN issued another open letter to President Ben Ali (in co-operation with FIDH) to protest against the ban on foreign travel imposed on Dr. Moncef Marzouki. Dr. Marzouki appeared before the senior magistrate on 23 October 2000, who charged him with 'being a member of an unrecognized association', 'spreading false information', 'defaming justice', and 'distributing tracts of a nature likely to disrupt public order and incite citizens to revolt against the laws of the land', accusations which can result in penal sanctions to the order of 20 years in prison.

### **Turkey**

On May 28-31, 1999, the EMHRN mandated Klaus Slavensky, Head of the Information Department at the Danish Centre for Human Rights, to meet with Mr Akin Birdal, President of the Human Rights Association (IHD) and express the EMHRN's solidarity with Mr Birdal before he starting a prison sentence of nine months and 15 days on June 3, 1999.

Mr Birdal was sentenced by the State Security Court on charges of "inciting people explicitly to hatred and hostility by discriminating on the basis of race, region, religious sects or opinion" for a speech on September 6, 1995, where he stated that an unfair and dirty war had been waged for 11 years because of the non-recognition of the rights of the Kurds.

Akin Birdal is among the founders of the Human Rights Association. He has reported on widespread and systematic torture, campaigns on freedom of expression, and initiatives for peace keeping. So far nearly 30 court actions have been brought against him.

During Klaus Slavensky's visit to the HRA it was discussed how the EMHRN could be of help in the difficult situation Mr Birdal is facing. Based on these consultations, it was suggested that during each week of Mr Birdal's imprisonment the Turkish authorities should receive a letter from organisations and individuals in the Euro-Mediterranean region, asking for his release. The Secretariat co-ordinated the action which received positive feed-back from the members.

\* Nazmi Gür from the Human Rights Association in Turkey and Kerim Yildiz from the Kurdish Human Rights Project, both members of the EMHRN, were invited to participate in the EC meeting in Stockholm to update the members on East Mediterranean human rights issues and to participate in the discussion on how these issues can be incorporated into the future strategy of the EMHRN. They suggested that the EMHRN focus more on Turkey, and proposed sponsoring a mission of the EMHRN to Turkey to disseminate knowledge about the Network.

\* On February 3, 2000, on behalf of the EMHRN and in co-operation with the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a former judge at the European Court of Human Rights, Mr Isi Foighel attended the the hearing of the State Security Court of Ankara on 3 February, 2000, against the Secretary General of the Human Rights Association of Turkey (IHD), Nazmi Gür, member of the EMHRN.

Nazmi Gür was charged with the crime of assisting organisation of an armed gang after publishing an article entitled "It is not hard to reach peace" on World Peace Day, 1 September, 1999, and faced between 3 and 7,5 years imprisonment for calling for a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and 15 years armed conflict in south east Turkey.

The mission was co-ordinated with the Kurdish Human Rights Project, the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, the Norwegian Bar Association, the Danish Centre for Human Rights and ICJ-Denmark, who also sent international trial observers to the hearing.

Nazmi Gür was acquitted because of lack of 'adequate and convincing evidence'.

The EMHRN later supported the publication of the report 'Peace is not Difficult: Observing the Trial of Nazmi Gür', that was published in co-operation with the Kurdish Human Rights Project, the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, the Norwegian Bar Association, and the Danish Centre for Human Rights on 16 May, 2000.

As mentioned above, the EMHRN facilitated financial support for the English translation of the IHD report on its Legislative Screening of Turkish legislation and funded a mission of IHD composed to Brussels, October 2000.

### **Other questions**

On 18 August, the EMHRN forwarded an Open letter to Greek Foreign Minister, G. Papandreou, concerning the harassment by the Greek Intelligence Service of Ms Aysal Zeybek, Office Coordinator at the Greek Helsinki Monitor, and concerning her complaints being brushed aside by the Greek Ombudsman.

On 17 July, the EMHRN forwarded an open letter to the Knesset, concerning the draft law on "Imprisonment of Combatants not Entitled to Prisoner-of-War Status", nullifying the distinction between combatants and civilians made in international law and diluting the protections given to civilians under the 4th Geneva Convention.

### **Germany**

In Autumn, 1999, the EMHRN was contacted by the German Mediterranean Forum and asked to support a follow-up conference to the Civil Fora that took place in Stuttgart in April, 1999. The purpose would be to raise awareness in Germany about the Barcelona process and to evaluate the Civil Fora and the

development of the Barcelona process in order to bring this experience to the Marseille conferences.

The EMHRN collaborated with the Friedrich Ebert, Heinrich Boell Foundations, the Mayor of Stuttgart, the German Mediterranean Forum and the Stuttgart Forum of Cultures and several other institutions and networks in organising the conference. It took place from 20-22 October, 2000, and concluded with a letter addressed to the key actors in the Barcelona process, highlighting the main acquis of the Stuttgart civil fora, and expressing concern about the development of the Barcelona process, in particular with regard to the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

#### **4. INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EMHRN**

##### **EC meetings**

The EC has met 5 times since the Stuttgart meeting (Paris, Stockholm, Amman, Paris, Stockholm). Besides dealing with organisational matters, membership applications, urgent initiatives and proposals from the members, it has engaged in a process aiming at defining a strategic approach for the EMHRN's work.

The EC meeting in Paris, July 8-9, 1999, primarily dealt with evaluating the Stuttgart General Assembly and discussing how to develop the EMHRN's work according to the guidelines of the AGM.

Furthermore, it discussed the necessity of redirecting the focus of the network towards a more activist approach where an impression is given of the human rights situation deteriorating in a key country like Egypt. The EC felt the urgency of addressing a EMHRN strategy on this issue and decided to meet in September, 1999.

The next meeting was supposed to take place in Ankara, Turkey, to strengthen the input of East Mediterranean members into the development of an EC strategy. However, due to the earthquake in September, 1999, the venue changed to Stockholm at the last moment.

Nazmi Gür, from the Human Rights Association in Turkey, and Kerim Yildiz from the Kurdish Human Rights Project, were invited to participate in the EC meeting in Stockholm, 3-4 September, 1999, to update the members on East Mediterranean human rights issues and participate in the discussion about how these could be incorporated into the future strategy of the EMHRN.

It was decided to focus more on Egypt during the autumn and to elaborate the strategy paper by integrating the Turkish perspective and placing it within the framework of the Barcelona Process.

In Amman, 19-20 January, 2000, the EC continued work developing a strategy plan and priorities for future EMHRN work.

It was decided to opt for the strategic choice of linking EMHRN work up to the official EMP agenda, while at the same time acknowledging the limits of the concept of the Barcelona process.

The EC agreed to give priority to the development of human rights mechanisms in relation to the EMP as a regional initiative; and as a key initiative: the participation in the Civil Forum under the French presidency of the EU, as well as dialogue with governments.

Thematic priorities were defined as being the Protection of human rights defenders, including freedom of association and expression; Human rights education; Migrants' rights and the rights of asylum seekers; Women's rights; Self-determination and the rights of refugee; Justice, including penal reform and access to justice.

It was also decided to start elaborating country strategies.

At the Paris meeting, the main issue was the discussion of thematic priorities, and a detailed planning of the Civil Forum in Marseille. Furthermore, the final obstacles in the way of taking concrete steps towards opening an office in Brussels were removed.

The Stockholm meeting was devoted to finalising the action plan, opening the office in Brussels and preparing the proceedings for the General Assembly.

### **New members**

In the past period, The EC has welcomed the following organisations and individuals as new members of the EMHRN:

Regular members:

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in Nazareth; Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie; Fédération des tunisiens pour une citoyenneté des deux rives; Greek Helsinki Committee, Greece; and the René Moawad Foundation, Lebanon.

Associate members:

Article 19 International Centre Against Censorship; Penal Reform International.

Individual members:

Ms Anna Bozzo, Researcher, Italy; Mr. Khémais Chammari, expert-consultant; Ms Annette Juenemann, Dr Habil, Researcher, Germany; Mr. Aktham Naisse, President the Committee for the Defence of Liberties and Democratic Freedoms (CDF); Mohamed Tahri Lawyer, Algeria; Ms Samira Trad, Consultant; Lebanon.

### **Cancellation of memberships**

In the period since the last General Assembly, the following organisations have ceased meaningful activities with the EMHRN, or have ceased responding to the EMHRN's requests or enquiries:

The Egyptian Community in Greece; The Mediterranean Centre for Human Rights; The European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation, (MEDEA Institute).

The EC therefore recommends the cancellation of these organisations' membership.

### **Membership criteria**

After discussion of the membership status of the Libyan League for Human Rights at the third General Assembly, the EC agreed to postpone the decision to admit the League as a full member until the fourth General Assembly. The EC acknowledged that the statutes had not been followed with regard to the procedures during the Stuttgart assembly: two-third of the regular members present at the General Assembly should agree on introducing new items on the agenda, and a vote should be taken on the admission of the League as a full member. Neither of these formalities was respected. At the EC meeting in Paris in July, 1999, it was decided to mandate the executive director to formulate amendments of the statutes in order for the Libyan League to be admitted as a regular member at the next General Assembly.

### **New organisational status of the EMHRN**

On 1 February, 2000, the EMHRN formally became an independent regional NGO. Until then the EMHRN had, in terms of financial management, been administered as a part of the Danish Centre for Human Rights. The reason for this arrangement was that funds for the Network were applied for in the name of the Danish Centre for Human Rights before the adoption of EMHRN statutes and election of the executive committee in 1997. In February, 2000, the projects implemented in the name of the DCHR were finalised and all new contracts are now signed in the name of the EMHRN. As a consequence, the EMHRN has registered as an independent NGO at the Danish Tax and Customs Authorities, and has drawn up an agreement with the DCHR, defining the terms of administrative co-operation with the DCHR. In conclusion, the EMHRN is now operating fully and independently according to its statutes.

### **Funding**

The funding situation of the EMHRN has significantly improved during the past period.

In June, 1999, the EMHRN submitted a 2,5 million euro project to the EU Commission for the period covering 1 January, 2000, to 31 December, 2003. The project was finally approved at the end of 1999 and the contract was signed in late May, 2000.

The fact that the EMHRN has become increasingly operational has also meant that other funding agencies have shown an interest in supporting the EMHRN. Contributions from the Ford Foundation in Cairo, Cordaid, and recently the British Foreign Office, bear witness to an increased recognition of the importance of the work carried out by the EMHRN.

The EMHRN is still highly dependent on EU support for its activities. However, contacts with several funding agencies indicate that, in the future, the EMHRN will be able to further diversify its funding sources.

### **Staff**

During the past period, Marc Schade-Poulsen has worked as the executive director of the EMHRN. He was the only full time employee until September 1, 2000, when Marit Floe Joergensen was employed as the EMHRN Information Officer. On 1 October, 2000, the EMHRN employed Sannie Nielsen as the third full time employee. She will be responsible for administrative affairs.

During the past period, the secretariat has been assisted by one or two part-time student assistants for various periods of time, i.e: Marit Floe Joergensen.;Olivier Mukarji; Karsten Gam Nielsen; Katrine Roemhild Nielsen; Louise Johansen; Ivar Herlev Soerensen, and Frederik Thuesen.