

PLAN OF ACTION OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK adopted at the second General Assembly, November, 1997

1. Introduction

On 27-28 November 1995 the governments of 27 countries (the Partners)¹, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission established the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (the Partnership) by adopting the Barcelona Declaration (the Declaration) and a Work Programme.

The signatories of the Declaration emphasized that the overall objective was to make the Mediterranean area a place for dialogue, exchange and co-operation guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity. They stressed that it requires a coordinated overall response to face new challenges on both sides of the Mediterranean and the strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights, whilst respecting the identity, the values and specificity of each of its participants. As such, they committed themselves to act in accordance with universal human rights principles, to develop rule of law and democracy, and to respect fundamental freedoms. At the same time, they recognised the important role civil society can play in contributing to the Euro-Mediterranean development process as an invaluable partner towards better mutual understanding and closer co-operation between the peoples². The intentions of the Declaration have since its signing been confirmed in bilateral agreements between the EU and South Mediterranean partners stating that the respect of human rights and democratic principles underlie their policies and are essential elements in the agreements³

Civil society has warmly welcomed the engagements of the Partners and the impulse thereby given to its role as an irreplaceable contribution to the protection of human rights and the consolidation of democratic institutions. It considers that the Barcelona Declaration and the association agreements have provided the Euro-Mediterranean region with important instruments for the protection of human rights.

Therefore, in the spirit of the Declaration, the Danish Centre for Human Rights called for a meeting of human rights organizations and individuals from the Middle East, North Africa and the EU. The meeting took place 10-11 January, 1997, and has been acknowledged as a part of the Barcelona Process at the Second Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 15-16 April, 1997⁴.

At the meeting the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (the Network) was established with the overall objective to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights principles embodied in the Barcelona Process. A Steering Committee was set up to prepare the Statutes and a Plan of Action for the Network, and to prepare a second General Assembly to take place in Copenhagen, 12-13 December, 1997. At its meeting in Copenhagen, 4-5 July, 1997, the Steering Committee finalised the Statutes of the Network as well as a proposal for a Plan of Action. During autumn, 1997, the documents were forwarded with a letter of invitation for the second General Assembly to more than 80 representatives of organisations and institutions, and individuals of the 27 Partners devoted to the principles of the Barcelona Declaration in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns. In all, 50 participants from over twenty countries attended the meeting. During two days of intensive and constructive debates the Network was consolidated as a forum within the Euro-Mediterranean region open to dialogue and co-operation between members of civil society as well as between civil society and the signing Partners of the Declaration.

The following Plan of Action is elaborated on the basis of the discussions of the General Assembly and follows its guide-lines. It describes 1) the objectives and priority issues of the Network, 2) the structure of the Network, and 3) the working programme of the Network.

2. Objectives and priority issues of the Network

The Network considers itself as a product of the Declaration and as a civil society partner of the Barcelona Process. The overall objective of the Network is: 1) to support and publicize the universal principles of human rights as expressed by all the international instruments on human rights and as expressed by the Barcelona Declaration; 2) to strengthen, assist and coordinate the efforts of its members to monitor compliance by the Participating States with the principles of the Declaration in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns and; 3) to support the development of democratic institutions, the promotion of the rule of law, human rights and human rights education in the Euro-Mediterranean region⁵. As such, the purpose of the Network is to contribute to the development of the objectives set out by the signing Partners of the Declaration in promoting dialogue, peace, stability, and the dignity and worth of the human person in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

In principle, the area of concern of the Network covers all rights mentioned in international instruments on human rights and in the Barcelona Declaration, including social and economic rights and the right to self-determination⁶. Under the Barcelona Declaration the Partner states are committed to "act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other obligations under international law, in particular those arising out of regional and international instruments to which they are party"⁷.

Nevertheless, since the signing of the Declaration human rights conditions in the Euro-Mediterranean region have continuously given rise to grave concerns. For example, in parts of the region press freedom is eroded by governments, in other parts torture and extrajudicial executions are systematically practised. In several countries freedom of association is under attack or severely hampered, human rights defenders are intimidated or harassed, and women's rights are denied. In some cases rights to movement are arbitrarily restricted, more generally they are systematically impeded. Protection standards of refugees and the right to seek asylum are in general insufficient, and racism and discrimination towards third country nationals is widespread. The range of human rights issues that the Network will deal with is thus very comprehensive.

However, the Network means from the outset to be an efficient mechanism for the protection and promotion of human rights within the context of the Barcelona Process. As such, priority issues have been identified including freedom of opinion and expression, thought and conscience, and assembly and association, as well as the protection of refugees and the respect for human dignity, including freedom from racism, xenophobia and intolerance. The choice of priority issues reflects the human rights situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It aims at creating synergy between the work of Northern and Southern human rights organisations and at defining the identity of the Network in having the Barcelona process as its focal point. On a methodological level the priority issues are inextricably linked to the following points: the raising of human rights awareness, the strengthening of human rights organisations, the protection of human rights defenders, and dialogue with national and regional institutions, authorities and agencies of the Partnership, as well as with other social, economic and cultural agents.

The Network considers that all human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and interrelated, as it is expressed in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993. It believes that peace, democracy and human rights are interdependent and interrelated. Furthermore, it is convinced that the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation is closely connected with a sustainable and balanced economic and social development, measures to combat poverty and promotion of greater understanding between cultures which goes hand in hand with the strengthening of democracy and respect for human rights, and with the participation of civil society in developing the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. As regards the Southern Mediterranean Partners, the Network believes that constraints on freedom of opinion and expression, thought and conscience, assembly and association curb the development of civil society in this region. The relaxation of government restraints on civil society is a prerequisite for the contribution of civil society to the development of the Partnership, and a vibrant, free, and independent civil society is a precondition for the development of democracy, for the respect of human rights and the rule of law. Viewed from this perspective, the freedoms of opinion and expression, thought and conscience, and of assembly and association are essential for the protection and promotion of all human rights and, in the last resort, for peace and stability in the region.

The situation as regards fundamental rights in the South is closely interrelated with the human rights problem of the North, which can be identified in the treatment of refugees and immigrants. On one hand, constraints on fundamental rights in the South contribute to an increased migration of people in lack of outlets to articulate their hopes for an improvement of life conditions. The constraints also contribute to increasing the number of refugees in the North. On the other hand, immigration has spurred a rise in racism and xenophobic sentiments, actions, and policies toward immigrants and refugees in Europe. Racism, xenophobia, intolerance, discrimination, the deterrence in asylum standards as well as the prevailing restrictions on people's movement from one country to another is impedimental for civil society and the work of human rights organisations. It hampers the development of understanding and communication between people, and it risks to backfire on the work of human rights organisations in the South, as they find it increasingly difficult to hold up an example to follow.

In general, intolerance, discrimination, restrictions on people's movement, etc., is not exclusively a problem of the North, just as freedom of expression is not only a problem of the South including for instance the right to access to information that is still a problem in many European states and in the institutions of the European Union. The fight for the priority issues as identified by the Network is an ongoing process in all societies. It is furthermore linked to methodological aspects: A general raising of human rights awareness and of comprehension of human rights instruments in the region is a prerequisite for the protection of such as freedom of opinion and association, and from racism and intolerance. A focus on specific problems related to women's rights should be an integral part of all actions related to awareness raising, and the promotion of the universality of human rights principles should aim at taking its point of departure in local cultural values. Firm positions are needed against double standards in relation to human rights and against the application of different criteria to similar issues in different countries. Furthermore, the strengthening of independent and non-partisan human rights organisations, and the quality of their work, as well as the protection of human rights defenders is required. Finally, constructive dialogue with national and regional authorities is closely related to this end as well as dialogue with other social, economic, political and cultural agents

3. The structure of the Network

The Network is a forum within the Euro-Mediterranean region open to independent and non-partisan national and regional organisations, and individuals being active in the human rights issues contained in the Declaration and willing to involve themselves in the overall regional human rights aspects of the Partnership.

The Network is not aiming at becoming a new regional organisation in itself, but considers that its principal task is to facilitate and enhance the work of its members. It works on the fundamental principle that Northern and Southern member organisations and institutions respect each other as equal partners. It builds on the awareness that the human rights situation varies greatly from one country to the other, and from one period of time to the other, and that the Network therefore as a general principle must respect the individual activities, needs and situation of the Members. It must remain flexible and open to deal with new situations and needs expressed by its Members and give particular attention to organisations deprived of basic elements to carry out their activities. At the same time it maintains that due to the international interrelatedness of human rights, a synergetic cooperation between members can be developed.

The Network will avoid duplicating existing initiatives in the region. It will build and rely on existing projects and competences within the membership basis. It believes that a decentralised approach and flexibility combined with the various backgrounds of the members will enrich its work. It acknowledges that time and efforts are needed to strengthen the internal dialogue, to exchange ideas and to learn from one another. At the same time, in order to fulfil its objectives and to strengthen the dialogue and co-operation between its Members as well as between the Members and the signing Partners of the Declaration, the Network has endowed itself with working programme and with a structure consisting of a General Assembly, an Executive Committee and a Secretariat (the "bodies of the Network"). Arabic, English and French will be the working languages of these bodies.

The meetings of the General Assembly, which possesses the plenary authority of the Network, will be held once a year (two days). It will constitute the main annual occasion for Members to discuss priority issues and to lay down the general guidelines for the activities of the Network. The Network aims at holding the meetings of the General Assembly in different countries, and they will include a seminar with sessions on human rights matters of urgent concern.

The Executive Committee will meet at least twice a year and give direction on policy for the activities of the Network between meetings of the General Assembly. It will be responsible for enhancing and facilitating the communication among the members of the Network, and between the Network and the institutions of the Partnership. It will seek assistance from "resource persons", encourage the creation of task force committees and of working groups, and stimulate member organisations, local or sub-regional networks, to function as "lead agencies", i.e. that member agencies - with the agreement of all - take on the responsibility for the organisation of a particular activity of interest to the Network.

The Secretariat will, subject to the authority of the General Assembly, be the operating bureau of the Network. It will work in close cooperation with the members of the Executive Committee and under supervision of the President. It will assist these officers of the Network and implement their decisions for action. Furthermore, it will function as a "clearing house", a centre of documentation and information for the Members and for the promotion of their initiatives and actions. Finally, it will manage the implementation of the Network's working programme with the advice of experts in various fields.

In all, the bodies of the Network will provide the framework for assisting the Members in their daily work and for facilitating their contacts to the institutions of the EU, the mechanisms of the Barcelona Process, the media, etc., and, as such, their capacity to work for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Funding is applied for to sustain and support the bodies of the Network in addition to membership fees.

4. The working programme of the Network

The working programme of the Network has been specified for a three-year period including three interrelated field of activities: a) documentation , information, and dissemination, b) dialogue, lobbying, and campaigning, and c) general education, capacity building and the protection of human rights defenders⁸.

A. Documentation, information, dissemination

A main purpose of the Network is to gather and disseminate information to the Partners, the institutions of the EU and the public concerning the provisions and principles of the Declaration. A major concern is furthermore to inform about human rights conditions in the Euro-Mediterranean region and the Partners' compliance with the provisions of the Declaration. Finally, the Network wishes to encourage exchanges between the members of the Network as well as with the political and administrative mechanisms of the Barcelona Process.

In order to satisfy these objectives the Network will continuously invite individuals, organisations and institutions to become new Members. Furthermore, the Network's activities in the field of documentation and information will be based on i) a computerised information service, ii) an annual report, iii) an annual seminar and iv) publications related to the seminars. The effect of these initiatives will be to promote dialogue on human rights issues in the region, to strengthen the human rights awareness and the efforts of civil society to monitor compliance by the Partner Countries with the principles of the Declaration in the field of human rights.

i) Computerised information service

The Network will establish a computerised information service: An electronic mailing list will enhance and facilitate the communication between the Members. It will be available for alert actions in relation to human rights violations and the protection of human rights defenders in the region. A Website will bring documentation and information with a focus on the general progress and latest news of the Barcelona Process, and on initiatives taken within the field of human rights in relation to the Partnership, such as the Meda-Democracy Programme, human rights training courses, etc. It will include information on the progress of the human rights situation of the Partners, and links will be available to member organisations in order to provide the users with news on local initiatives. Finally, the Network will encourage the establishment of a working group to provide an overview on the Website of the legislation of the Partners, i.e. the international and regional human rights conventions and declarations they have signed and ratified and legislation related to the Network's priority issues.

The home page will be edited by the Secretariat with due respect to copy rights and to the confidentiality required by the contributors. It will be open for all Subscribers of the Network and based on information provided by member organisations and institutions, international and regional organisations, institutions of the EU and the Partners. The Secretariat will supplement this information by subscribing to relevant periodicals, magazines and news papers.

Funding is applied for 1) to establish and maintain the computerised information service at the Secretariat, 2) subscription to relevant periodicals, magazines and news papers, and 3) computer and software equipment for Network Members lacking these facilities (priority will be given to Members outside the EU countries). While waiting to be connected to the information system these Members will be assisted by the Secretariat and will be reached by fax and ordinary mail.

ii) Annual reports

The annual report will be concerned with the human rights situation of the Partners. It will include a section which reports on the activities of the official Partnership and analyse progresses or set-backs of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process and the Partners' compliance with the human rights principles as expressed in the Declaration and in the bilateral association agreements. It will furthermore include recommendations as regards the implementation of human rights within the Partnership. A second section will summarise the activities of the Members in relation to the Network and to the mechanisms of the Partnership. The summary will be based on the annual reports of the Members or on special briefings the Members wish to submit in this regard. A final section will give an account of the activities of the Secretariat during the past year.

The Secretariat will, under direction of the Executive Committee, draw up the report in close co-operation with Network Members and specialists. It will be discussed and adopted by the General Assembly, and disseminated to the Members, authorities, institutions, organisations, libraries and media of the Partnership. Funding is applied for to write and edit the report, for its translation into Arabic and French, and for its printing and dissemination.

iii) Seminars

Each year the Network will organise a seminar for its Members (three to four days with sixty participants). On the methodological level the seminars will through a participatory approach in plenum sessions and workshops favour the exchange of ideas and experiences of the participants. As such, they aim at creating synergy between the participants, at stimulating new initiatives, and at converting a comprehensive view of the issues into a constructive methodology of action. In order to enhance the process of dialogue with the Partnership, representatives of such as the EU Commission, local authorities, government representatives, and parliamentarians will be invited to participate in their capacity of experts or as rank-and-file participants. The seminars will be designed in a way as to provide the participants with sufficient elements to organise seminars/workshops with similar content on a local level. They will focus on the priority issues of the Network and will relate these to urgent topics within the Barcelona Process in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns.

The first seminar is entitled "The Human Rights Dimension of the Barcelona Process". It will situate the Barcelona Process in an overall regional context and furthermore provide an in-depth examination of the political and administrative mechanisms of the Barcelona Process in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns including the institutions, the agenda, and funds related to the Partnership⁹.

The second seminar is entitled "Peace, Democracy, the Prevention of Human Rights Violations and the Protection of Human Rights Principles in the Barcelona Process." It is based on the assumption that the respect for human rights, democracy and peace are interrelated in their political, economic and social dimensions, and that they are closely connected with the general objective of turning the Mediterranean basin into an area of stability and prosperity. It will examine concrete examples of initiatives for the promotion

of peace, democracy and human rights in the region and explore the role of civil society and human rights activists therein. With a focus on key areas in the region it will examine how human rights activists and organisations can improve their actions in promoting the capacity of local authorities to protect human rights standards under conditions of strife and democratic deficiency. It will examine how human rights activists and organisations can adopt preventive measures in order to better protect themselves under similar conditions. Finally, it will discuss how regional and sub-regional co-operation can contribute to an improvement of the above mentioned aims.

The third seminar is entitled "Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance, Human Dignity and the Barcelona Process". It is based on the fact that the Network can become a unique forum in dealing with these issues since it gathers organisations from the whole Euro-Mediterranean region. Firstly, attention will be given to the interpretation of the concepts and to how they are interrelated or can be discerned from social, economic and political problems. Secondly, the seminar explore the ways in which the phenomena are interrelated or differ across the region and how they can be reconciled with the freedom of expression, assembly and association. Finally, it will focus on the movement of people from one country to another and on asylum standards in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It will examine concrete initiatives in the region, and discuss the role of regional and sub-regional co-operation in counteracting manifestations of racism, xenophobia and intolerance, in promoting greater understanding between cultures and an ethic of human solidarity.

Funding is applied for to arrange the seminars. However, other more urgent issues might come up in the three-year period, and other topics such as rule of law, torture, discrimination are concerns of the Network. Eventually, as the Barcelona Process progresses and synergy increases within the Network the seminar subjects for the second and third year may be reformulated.

iv) Publications

The Network will produce a booklet in relation to each seminar. It will be distributed to the Members of the Network, as well as authorities, institutions, organisations, libraries and media of the Partnership.

The first booklet will in detail describe the agenda of the Barcelona Process, key institutions and mechanisms of the Partnership in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns as well as key persons to be addressed within the Partnership. Finally it will contain a summary of the proceedings of the first seminar and of the conclusions reached by the participants. It is intended as a tool for the Network to gather and disseminate information concerning the provisions and principles of the Barcelona Declaration, a tool for goal-oriented Network actions, and for furthering the process of dialogue within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns. Funding is applied for to do an initial research on the practical expressions of the Barcelona Process and to write, print and distribute the booklet as well as for its translation into Arabic and French.

In connection to the second and third seminar a booklet will be produced containing a summary of the proceedings, the conclusions and new initiatives arrived at, and recommendations of the participants to be addressed to the Network Members, the Partnership, national authorities and the international community. Funding is applied for to edit, print and distribute the booklets as well as for their translation into Arabic and French.

B. Dialogue, lobbying and campaigning

The actions of the Network in the fields of documentation, information and dissemination will lay the foundation for its activities as regards dialogue, lobbying and campaigning.

An initial task of the Network will be to approach and arrange meetings with relevant officials and representatives of the EU institutions, the Partner Countries and with international and regional organisations devoted to the implementation of human rights in the region. The purpose of these meetings will be to present the objectives and working programme of the Network and to initiate a process of dialogue and exchange of information to be maintained throughout the three-year period. The effect of these initiatives will be to establish the Network as a constructive and credible part of civil society in the common efforts of both sides of the Mediterranean to promote humanitarian concerns.

The Network is open to dialogue and co-operation with the official and un-official partners of the Barcelona Process in what it considers to be a process of furthering the common goal of promoting and protecting of human rights standards in the region. As such, the Network aims at being present in connection to official meetings of the Partnership.

In the EU, members of the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process will be approached as well as officials of the Commission responsible for human rights affairs of the Partners. As regards the European Parliament, the Network will make contacts with country rapporteurs, and members of the Subcommittee on Human Rights, the Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy, the Delegation to the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and in the Arab Maghreb Union, the Delegation for relations with the Mashreq countries and the Gulf States, the Delegation for relations with Israel and, the Delegation for relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council. Furthermore, contacts will be made with "mixed committees" and the Economic and Social Committee of the European Communities, in particular Members of the Section for External Relations, Trade- and Development Policies.

On a national level member organisations and institutions of the Network will take in hand relevant contacts and meetings with government representatives, members of parliaments, representatives of local institutions of the Partnership, professional associations and other social, economic and cultural agents.

Finally, the Network will collaborate in domains of awareness raising, lobbying, information, education, capacity building and protection of human rights defenders with international and regional NGO's and institutions such as Amnesty International, Article 19, Human Rights Watch, The International Commission of Jurists, The International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, International Service for Human Rights, The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Penal Reform International, Reporters sans Frontières, The World Organisation against Torture, Arab Dialogue from Below, The Arab Institute for Human Rights, The Arab Organisation for Human Rights, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Collectivity 95 - Maghreb Equality, The European Institute for Research on Mediterranean and Euro-Arab Cooperation, Forum of Citizens of the Mediterranean, The Mediterranean Centre for Human Rights, The European Council on Refugees and Exiles, and Migrants Forum of the EU.

The established liaisons and channels of communication will provide the Network with a framework to define a systematic plan for lobbying and campaigns. Furthermore, they

will lay the foundation for Network campaigns and for facilitating the contact between Network Members and the Partnership.

On a permanent and overall level the major concern of the Network will be to lobby for the Partnership to adopt a working programme for the implementation of the provisions and principles of human rights as expressed in international instruments on human rights and in the Declaration. Furthermore, the Network will lobby for the bilateral association negotiations and agreements to be concluded with, and followed-up by, due considerations to the current human rights practices of the Partners and in respect for international human rights principles. Finally, the Network will lobby for advancing matters of its Member's concern especially where local human rights conditions are deteriorating and urgent protection of human rights defenders is required.

The lobbying activities of the Network will be sustained by urgent alert actions by means of the electronic mailing system and systematic campaigns including briefings, and press releases directed to the institutions of the Partnership, national institutions and authorities, the media and the public at large. In all, lobbying, campaigns and urgent alert actions will be based on the active participation of individuals, organisations and institutions of the Network whose inputs will be complemented by the Secretariat. Funding is applied for to sustain the Network's dialogue, lobbying and campaigning activities.

C. General education, capacity building, and the protection of human rights defenders

i) Education

In the Barcelona Declaration the Partners recognize the essential contribution civil society can make in the process of development of the Partnership. The Network wishes to be conducive to this process by strengthening and assisting its Members in their work for raising human rights awareness and for the promotion of rule of law in the region. In this regard, it will support initiatives of its Members in fields such as retrospective conferences on historic turning points in the region and the impact of these on human rights and humanitarian concerns; legal advice to immigrants; the promotion of unbiased images of other cultures in the media and in school books; the promotion of gender equality; and publications, exhibitions and conferences on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. At the same time the Network considers human rights education and capacity building projects to be of outmost importance. However, the human rights situation varies greatly from one country to the other as well as the needs and capacity of Network Members. A decentralised approach is therefore adequate.

In the field of human rights education the Network will initiate, support and promote the idea of human rights education among its Members. The Secretariat will assist its Members in fund raising. It will inform about already existing courses within the region such as the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues' support programme for national human rights NGO's in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, the human rights courses of the Danish Centre for Human Rights and of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. It will encourage exchanges between Members at their respective national courses. The Secretariat will be at the disposal of the Members wishing it to act as a "clearing house" for material produced by these and for the valuable experience and know-how in the field of legal and judicial co-operation Network Members have gained over the years.

It will encourage the initiative of 88.20 Education and Acting for a Better World, the Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights

Studies in launching a two-years project on human rights education in the Euro-Mediterranean region in liaison with the Network:

The project will be conducted under the aegis of the Network and will focus on those countries represented in its membership. The central thrust of the project will be to review the provisions for and practice of human rights education of the Partners. The project will review official and non-official policies and current practice in human rights education. It will review official policy statements as well as structures, procedures and support for human rights education. Furthermore, it will review similar policies and practices in the voluntary sector, as well as providing a number of detailed case studies in a selected range of countries from each of the regions represented in the Network.

Apart from providing the above mentioned overview, the project will seek to highlight key lessons and challenges within human rights education as well as providing comparative case studies between countries and projects. The central idea behind such an approach is to achieve one of the main objectives of the Network - learning from each other. The project will also focus on the gaps and challenges facing human rights education of the Partners. On the basis of this, suggestions and recommendations will be made for strengthening human rights education and the future work in this regard within the Network. The project will also provide a listing of resources, policy statements and methodologies within human rights education.

All stages from pilot testing to research to publication, the project will liaise with the structures and procedures established by the Network. To this end, a number of focused seminars will be organised as well as regular reporting to and consultation with the assembly (funding will be applied for from a number of funding programmes).

ii) Capacity building

The methodology of information, exchange and support will be applied to capacity building projects including assisting and stimulating Members to become lead agencies of the Network within their field of specialisation. The projects can consist in such as courses on leadership and management, fund raising, strategic planning, building of research and documentation capacity, rehabilitation of victims of torture and violence, legal advice for women, and training courses for parliamentarians, members of professional associations and journalists.

The Secretariat will assist the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), the Mediterranean Centre for Human Rights and the Danish Centre for Human Rights in implementing a three-year training programme for NGOs in the Mediterranean. The basic idea of the programme, which is in the phase of consultation, is to help organisations in their work related to United Nations' international treaty bodies in Geneva. The project has two elements of which the first consists of two training sessions in the Mediterranean region in order to give a first briefing. The second concerns the reception, logistical support and training of Euro-Mediterranean human rights defenders on the occasion of the meetings of the treaty bodies in Geneva, especially for those activists whose state's reports are being examined by one of the Committees. The four relevant treaty bodies to be considered are: the Committee on Civil and Political Rights, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural rights, the Committee against Torture, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The Secretariat will, in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Members, assist the organisers in the selection of candidates. In a similar spirit, the Secretariat will in the future propose human rights defenders from the Euro-Mediterranean region who could be candidates to attend the training courses of the ISHR in Geneva.

iii) Protection of human rights defenders

Human rights education and capacity building is closely connected to the protection of human rights defenders that taken in its broadest sense consists in providing civil society with all legal means to act. The Network will encourage and support its Members in initiating dialogues with representatives of relevant authorities on national and sub-regional levels to improve their working conditions. It will support member organisations' work for the drafting of a genuine UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and it will assist the ISHR in circulating, for consultation among the Members, the first draft for guide-lines to teach to human rights organisations which type of preventive measures they could take in order to better protect themselves.

Furthermore, it will encourage the establishing of a working group to examine the modalities for improving the protection of human rights defenders in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It will stimulate the working group to study how methods of increased communication between organisations and human rights activists, increased international visibility, trial monitoring and urgent alert actions can enhance the protection of human rights defenders. Finally, it will encourage the working group to study preventative measures such as the taking account of the cultural environment, adequate responses to media attacks, and improved solidarity of human rights organisations.

Funding is applied for to sustain the overall co-ordination function of the Secretariat.

Appendix 1. First draft programme for the first seminar of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network: The Human Rights Dimension of the Barcelona Process

The objective of the seminar is to situate the Barcelona Process in an overall regional context and to provide an in-depth examination of the political and administrative mechanisms of the Barcelona Process in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns, including a review of the institutions, the agenda, and funds related to the Partnership. Through a participatory approach in plenum sessions and workshops, the seminar aims at ensuring the exchange of experience and ideas among the participants in relation to the Barcelona process and its human rights dimension, as well as creating synergy between the participants and stimulating new initiatives.

The Network plans the seminar to take place in Brussels in mid-June, 1998, including visits to the EU Commission and the European Parliament. Officials of the political and administrative mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, parliamentarians, and individual experts will be invited as speakers in the plenum sessions. Facilitators will be attached to the workshops. Duration: three days. Number of participants: Sixty (including invited speakers).

a) Day one - morning

Visit to the EU Commission and Plenum Session: Introduction to the political and administrative mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership including a presentation of the conferences of ministers, The Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona process, the Follow-up Committee of High Officials and the EU Commission.

Workshops: The experience of European national and regional organisations concerning the EU and the OSCE in relation to human rights, refugees, migration and the fight against racism. The experience of international and regional human rights organisations in lobbying the mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Afternoon

Plenum session: Funding of human rights project in the Euro-Mediterranean region: the Meda-Democracy programme, and other funding agencies.

Workshops: Discussion, exchange of experience and evaluation of results in relation to human rights projects in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

b) Day two - morning

Visit to the European Parliament and Plenum Session: Presentation of the role of the European Parliament in the Barcelona process, including its country rapporteurs and relevant committees, subcommittees and delegations in the field of human rights and humanitarian concerns.

Afternoon

Workshops: The experience of national human rights organisations in lobbying the mechanisms of the Barcelona process - discussion and exchange of experience.

c) Day three - morning

Workshops: Civil society, dialogue, and the promotion and protection of human rights within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership:

i) Integrating women's rights in the Barcelona process, a cultural process ?

ii) Human rights education in the Barcelona process.

iii) Protection of human rights defenders in the Barcelona process

iv) Establishing a working programme for the implementation of human rights in the Barcelona process

Afternoon

Plenum session: General discussion of the seminar results and recommendations for future actions.

Appendix 2. Time schedule for the activities of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network

Starting Date: 1 April, 1998. Ending Date: 31 March, 2001.

The time schedule for the activities is drawn up on the assumption that funding is available from 1 April, 1998. The dates may be adjusted to conform to the agenda of the official meetings of the Barcelona Process.

1998

Month (1,2,3 etc)	Description of activity
4	Executive Committee meeting.
5	<p>i) Establishment of the computerised informationservice and initiation of the general process of information, documentation and dissemination for a three-year period.</p> <p>ii) Initiation of the process of dialogue, lobbying and campaigning for a three-year period.</p> <p>iii) Initiation of the process of general education and capacity building, and human rights defenders for a three-year period.</p>

6	First seminar: "The Human Rights Dimension of the Barcelona Process".
7	
8	
9	Executive Committee meeting.
10	
11	
12	Publication of booklet on the Human Rights Dimension of the Barcelona Process.

1999

Month (1,2,3 etc)	Description of activity
1	
2	General Assembly.
3	Publication of Annual Report.
4	Executive Committee meeting.
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	Executive Committee meeting.
10	Second seminar: Peace, Democracy, the Prevention of Human Rights Violations and the Protection of Human Rights Principles in the Barcelona Process.
11	
	Publication of booklet on the second seminar.

2000

Month (1,2,3 etc)	Description of activity
1	

2	General Assembly.
3	Publication of Annual Report
4	Executive Committee meeting.
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	Executive Committee meeting.
10	Third seminar: "Racism, Xenophobia, Intolerance, Human Dignity and the Barcelona Process".
11	
12	Publication of a booklet from the third seminar.

2001

Month (1,2,3 etc)	Description of activity
1	
2	General Assembly.
3	Publication of Annual Report.
4	Executive Committee Meeting.

Appendix 3. Extract from the Barcelona Declaration

Principles of the Barcelona Declaration implying a political commitment by all parties to implement and adhere to fundamental human rights and freedoms: On page two and three, the signatories engages themselves to:

- i. act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as other obligations under international law, in particular those arising out of regional and international instruments to which they are party;
- ii. develop the rule of law and democracy in their political systems, while recognizing in this framework the right of each of them to choose and freely develop their own political, socio-cultural, economic and judicial system;
- iii. respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and guarantee the effective legitimate exercise of such rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, freedom of association for peaceful purposes and freedom of thought, conscience and religion, both individually and together with other members of the same group, without any discrimination on ground of race, nationality, language, religion or sex;

iv. give favourable consideration, through dialogue between the parties, to exchanges of information on matters relating to human rights, fundamental freedoms, racism and xenophobia;

v. respect and ensure respect for diversity and pluralism in their societies, promote tolerance between different groups in society and combat manifestations of intolerance, racism and xenophobia. The participants stress the importance of proper education in the matter of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

On page seven they:

guarantee protection of all the rights recognized under existing legislation of migrants legally resident in their respective territories.

Statements of the Barcelona Declaration as regards civil society: On page seven in the Barcelona Declaration the signatories state that they:

i. recognize the essential contribution civil society can make in the process of development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and as an essential factor for greater understanding and closeness between the people;

ii. agree to strengthen and/or introduce the necessary instruments of decentralized cooperation to encourage exchanges between those active in development within the framework of national laws: leaders of political and civil society, the cultural and religious world, universities, the research community, the media, organisations, the trade unions and public and private enterprises;

iii. encourage actions of support for democratic institutions and for the strengthening of the rule of law and civil society.

Endnotes:

1 Besides the governments of the 15 EU countries, the signatories are the governments of Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Palestinian National Authorities ([back](#))

2 See appendix 3 ([back](#))

3 Article 2 in the association agreements between the EU and Israel, Jordan, Morocco, the Palestinian National Authorities, and Tunisia ([back](#)).

4 See annex 3 in the Conclusions of the Second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference, Malta 15-16 April, 1997 ([back](#)).

5 See Statutes of the Network ([back](#)).

6 See the Barcelona Declaration page 3 and 7 ([back](#)).

7 See the Barcelona Declaration, page 2 ([back](#)).

8 See appendix 2 for the time schedule ([back](#)).

9 See appendix 1 for a draft programme ([back](#)).