

## EMHRN PLAN OF ACTION 2001-2003

ADOPTED AT THE 4TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY, NOVEMBER 2000<sup>1</sup>

Five years ago the governments of 27 countries (the Partners), and the European Union, in establishing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership initiative (EMP), committed themselves to act in accordance with the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. They agreed to develop the rule of law and democracy in their political systems and to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms including freedom of expression and freedom of association, and to combat racism, xenophobia and intolerance. Furthermore, they recognized the important role civil society can play in contributing to the Euro-Mediterranean development process by promoting better mutual understanding and closer co-operation between peoples.

These intentions of the Barcelona Declaration have since then been confirmed in bilateral Association Agreements between the EU and five South Mediterranean partners, article two of which states that the respect for human rights and democratic principles underlies their policies and is an essential element of the agreements. Furthermore, it has been confirmed in relation to pre-accession strategies for three non-EU Mediterranean Partners based on the Copenhagen Criteria.

The EMHRN was established in January 1997 upon the initiative of North and South based human rights organisations in response to the Barcelona Declaration and the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Today, it has more than sixty members representing human rights organisations and institutions, as well as individuals, from over twenty countries in the region.

Its overall objective is to

- \* Support and publicize the universal principles of human rights as expressed by all international instruments on human rights and as expressed by the Barcelona Declaration of November 1995.
- \* Strengthen, assist and coordinate the efforts of its members to monitor compliance by the Partner States with the principles of the Barcelona Declaration in the field of human rights;
- \* Support the development of democratic institutions, the promotion of rule of law, human rights and human rights education in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Since its establishment, the EMHRN has become known as a credible regional civil society partner to the EMP.

In the years to come, the EMHRN will develop its approach as a constructive interface between the EMP institutions, human rights organizations in the region and other relevant agents involved in the Barcelona process.

The following pages details the main issues and initiatives that will guide the EMHRN's work. It is based on the EMHRN statutes; its work program of 1997; recommendations of the third General Assembly, April 1999, and proposals developed by the executive committee since the Stuttgart assembly.

The paper describes the

1. General considerations upon which the EMHRN's work is built.
2. General methodology of the EMHRN.

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<sup>1</sup> Amended by the 5th GA in 2002 – see end of document

3. Concrete initiatives that will be taken by the EMHRN in the future.

## **1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The *raison-d'être* and the specificity of the EMHRN is the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and the dynamic the Barcelona process has installed in the region. The EMHRN work program and strategy are closely linked to the EMP and are guided by the following three assumptions:

\* The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the accompanying Barcelona process offer an important framework for human rights, democracy and civil society promotion and protection.

\* Yet, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is dominated by a top-down approach, and it is more directed by security concerns than by solidarity principles.

\* There is a need to strengthen cooperation between human rights activists working on the ground in order for these to benefit from, and be able to act upon, the rise of this new regional geo-political entity. Network structures and horizontal cooperation are flexible and participatory ways of meeting such new challenges.

Therefore, and based on the recognition that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, the EMHRN aims to

\* develop the human rights instruments and mechanisms that are embedded in the Barcelona process

\* monitor the impact of the Barcelona process on human rights promotion and protection

\* strengthen civil society participation in the development of the Barcelona process;

\* enhance human rights organisations' capacity to work on the ground through a synergetic process of exchange of experience and knowledge between the organisations on the basis of their constituencies

It will do this by means of a general methodology consisting of three interlinked and interrelated activities:

A. Information, documentation and dissemination.

B. Dialogue, advocacy and campaigning.

C. Capacity building and education.

## **2. GENERAL METHODOLOGY**

### **A. Information, documentation and dissemination**

The EMHRN will raise awareness of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process among its members and the public at large, and inform the EMP mechanisms and the public about the human rights situation in the region as well as about the work of human rights organisations.

This will be carried out through

- \* the maintenance of a computerised information service (including a web site and an electronic mailing lists);
- \* the development of a media strategy; periodical reports about the development of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process and about key human rights issues in the region;
- \* in-depth research on issues which are not covered by existing knowledge; and
- \* the publication of reports on the general activities of the EMHRN.

Furthermore, the EMHRN will each year organise a training seminar for its members on key human rights issues related to the Barcelona process. A booklet will be produced in relation to each seminar as a tool for goal oriented activities.

## **B. Dialogue, lobbying and campaigning**

The EMHRN will participate in the strengthening of the human rights mechanisms embedded in the Barcelona process, and promote dialogue between civil society and the EMP institutions in the field of human rights.

On a permanent level the EMHRN will lobby the Partnership to develop a working programme, actions and mechanisms for the implementation of the human rights provisions and principles of the Barcelona Declaration and EMP Summit conclusions, as well as the human rights clauses of the Association agreements. In addition, campaigns on urgent issues will be organised.

Dialogue, lobbying and campaigning will be based on the active participation of the members of the EMHRN whose inputs will be complemented by the operational bureau of the EMHRN in Copenhagen and its antenna in Brussels (see below).

The EMHRN will arrange meetings between its members and relevant officials and representatives of the EU institutions, and of the Partner Countries, and with international and regional organisations, depending on the nature of the issue. These activities will be supported by the EMHRN reports and its computerised information service.

## **C. Capacity building and general education**

Capacity building and awareness raising is crucial for human rights promotion and protection in the region. The EMHRN will enhance this by

- \* strengthening communication and exchanges between human rights organisations;
- \* promoting the development of joint projects between EMHRN members including transfer of knowledge from one organisation to another.

This will be carried out by encouraging members to become lead agencies within their field of expertise and by developing networks within the network; organising exchange visits between member organisations and periodical meetings of working groups under the umbrella of the EMHRN on issues such as human rights

education; migrant and refugee issues; women's rights; conflict resolution; human rights monitoring; and capacity building.

Special concern will be devoted to the support of member organisations operating in countries where state repression is high and funding opportunities limited.

Communication, exchange and coordination will be supported by the operational bureau including its information service.

### **3. EMHRN METHODOLOGY IN PRACTICE**

On a concrete level, the EMHRN will opt for the strategic choice of linking its program of activities to the official agenda of the EMP, while maintaining an independent and critical stance on the Partnership's development.

The EMHRN will open an office in Brussels that will

- \* represent and implement the policy of the EMHRN and its members in relation to the institutions and representatives of the EU and the EMP.

- \* inform EMHRN members about the policies and development of the institutions of the EU and the EMP.

- \* facilitate access of EMHRN members to the institutions of the EU and the EMP.

From early 2001, the EMHRN will establish a calendar of all main events related to the Barcelona process relevant to human rights, i.e. regional meetings, bilateral meetings, EU institution agendas, priorities of the various Presidencies of the EU, development of new policies, resolutions, etc. The calendar will be regularly updated and revised and will be a leading thread for the timing of EMHRN activities in relation to the Barcelona process.

These activities will be implemented following 4 tracks:

A. Regional mechanism

B. Key initiatives

C. Country priorities

D. Thematic priorities

In carrying out its program, the EMHRN will coordinate or cooperate with relevant partners, such as member organisations, and international and regional human rights NGOs. Thus, the activities listed below should not be considered the exclusive domain of the EMHRN, but as key activities to which the EMHRN will commit itself in order to further the development of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process.

## **A. Regional mechanisms**

Despite the EMP governments' commitment to human rights in the Barcelona Declaration and despite the reaffirmation thereof in the bilateral association agreements (as well as in pre-accession talks) few steps have been taken by the official partnership to establish structures, fora or mechanisms whereby human rights concerns can be taken further within the framework of the Barcelona process.

Building on the results of previous activities, the EMHRN will focus on four potential human rights mechanisms of the EMP:

- i. The MEDA programs
- ii. The Committee of High Officials, the Barcelona Ambassadors.
- iii. The Euro-Mediterranean Inter-Parliamentarian Forum
- iv. The Association Council meetings

### **i. The MEDA Programs**

The MEDA programs constitute the main financial instrument of the EMP and, according to the MEDA regulation, their implementation should be based on the respect for human rights and democratic principles. In addition, a percentage of the MEDA funds are to be used for the support of civil society in agreement with governments of partner countries.

However, little has been done so far to integrate a human rights approach into policy making regarding MEDA funds, and little is known about the funds' impact on the human rights situation in the beneficiary countries, or on the impact on civil society support programs.

Therefore, the EMHRN will advocate for

- \* the EU to produce regular evaluations of the MEDA Programs' impact on the human rights situation in the region.
- \* the ear-marking of a fixed percentage of the MEDA funds for human rights projects within the framework bilateral programs between the EU and its Mediterranean partners. Unused funds should be returned and allocated for regional projects.
- \* the ear-marking of a fixed percentage of the general MEDA funds for the support of countries engaged in explicit reform programs towards democracy and human rights compliance, for example by means of national human rights plans as recommended at the world conference in Vienna 1993.

In order to support advocacy in this field, the EMHRN will commission a report that will:

- \* Critically assess existing documentation regarding the use of the MEDA funds, including existing evaluation reports.
- \* Enquire into the existing use of (and programs for) MEDA funds devoted to civil society support.

On the basis of the results of EMHRN advocacy in this field, it will examine the feasibility of establishing a similar initiative in relation to the European Investment Bank policies.

#### ii. The Follow-Up Committee of High Officials

The EMHRN will advocate for the establishment of an independent committee under the Committee of High Officials (the Barcelona Ambassadors) with the mandate to:

- \* Recommend to the Committee of High Officials specific action, targeting a particular country.
- \* Appoint special rapporteurs in relation to countries as well as thematic issues.
- \* Enter into dialogue with governments regarding specific questions and problems.
- \* Prepare an annual report on the human rights situation in the individual countries and possible assess areas where progress in the human rights protection can be detected and where it is moving backwards.
- \* Become a focal point for partner countries, which are looking for financial assistance from the European Union for human rights programmes, including the development of national human rights plans.

In order to move this idea forward a comprehensive paper on the idea and structure will be elaborated situating it in relation to other institutional models and finding inspiration in the sub-commission of the Human Rights Commission; pre-accession strategies to the EU; the EU-ACP Agreement; and the Commonwealth institutions.

Before being launched, the paper will be discussed at a meeting with experts and members of the EMHRN.

#### iii. The Euro-Mediterranean Inter-Parliamentary Forum

The EMHRN will advocate for the establishment of a human rights committee within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Inter-parliamentary Forum having the mandate to address human rights issues of regional concerns, including individual cases and country issues, and to propose to the EMP governments:

- \* Initiatives for the promotion and protection of human rights in the region.
- \* Initiatives towards arriving at common standards and norms in the field of human rights.
- \* Initiatives towards promoting dialogue between civil society, parliaments and governments.

#### iv. Association Council Meetings

The EMHRN will continue past efforts of advocating for human rights to become an explicit point on the agenda of the Association Council meetings in relation to the bi-lateral agreements between the EU and its

Mediterranean Partners. In this regard, its work will be linked to, and based on, the three initiatives listed above. In order to further the idea of incorporating human rights on the agenda, the EMHRN will

- \* Publish briefings/ reports on the occasion of association council meetings in cooperation with members.
- \* Urge the relevant Inter-parliamentary delegations of the European Parliament to promote human rights dialogue, and assessments of human rights progress or set-backs, in relation to association council meetings.
- \* Urge the European Parliament to organise human rights hearings in relation to assent procedures related to bi-lateral association agreements.

## **B. Key initiatives**

### **i. Civil Fora**

The EMHRN was established as a civil society partner to the EMP. As such it has given priority to the Civil Fora held in relation to the Summits of the EMP. These are occasions for affirming the importance of civil society participation in human rights promotion and protection in the Barcelona process, and for making civil society voices heard by governments and the public at large.

The EMHRN was among the main organisers of the Civil Forum in Stuttgart, April 1999, and is co-organising the Marseille Civil Forum, November 2000, and has as such been conducive to bringing human rights and independent human rights activists on the forefront of the agenda of these meetings.

The EMHRN will build on this acquis. As soon as the dates and location of the 5<sup>th</sup> EMP Summit is known, the EMHRN will take contact to relevant partners and officials in order to ensure a strong human rights input at the meeting. Furthermore, it will work for the strengthening of direct encounters between civil society representatives and governments before, under and after the Summits.

### **ii. Dialogue with governments**

Human rights dialogues are important mechanisms in creating a general understanding of the nature and scope of human rights as well as creating a less defensive attitude towards the implementation of human rights.

Thus, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network will seek to promote that human rights dialogues are being established in as many areas as possible within the framework of the Barcelona process. In this regard, the EMHRN aims to

- \* assist whenever needed members of the network in creating dialogues at the national level;
- \* use the international dimension of the network to engage itself in dialogues with governments as a supplement or alternative to a uniquely domestic dialogue.

The EMHRN has already initiated dialogue with the Jordanian, the Syrian and the Egyptian governments on various levels, and is involved in a joint project on Access to Justice with the Nordic EU countries.

Before the fifth general assembly, it will produce a paper evaluating the outcome of its initiatives in this regard in order to stimulate discussions on how to move forward in this field.

Regarding the dialogue conducted by members of the network, it will elaborate a tool box with good examples and methodologies taking into consideration the different cultural and religious traditions and approaches to dialogues.

Furthermore, the Network will suggest to the Commission that it support and initiate the creation of national human rights plans in all partner countries (following the recommendations from the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993) as an opportunity to establish and institutionalize a dialogue between governments and human rights organisations and civil society in general.

### **C. Countries priorities**

The EMHRN will in the next years give priority to the human rights situation in the non-EU EMP countries, in particular Turkey and the Arab EMP countries. As mentioned above, special concern will be devoted to the support of member organisations operating in countries where state repression is high and funding opportunities limited.

The situation in the EU countries is far better than in the South and Eastern part of the Mediterranean in terms of democracy, human rights compliance and participation of civil society in decision making processes. Therefore human rights issues in the North will mainly be approached through the EMHRN's thematic priorities.

In order to systematise its country strategy, members of the EC and secretariat staff will during the first half of year 2001 visit all South and East Mediterranean members with the purpose to:

- \* Discuss priorities of the members in relation to the Barcelona process for the next years to come.
- \* Discuss what members expect from the EMHRN.
- \* Discuss members' contribution to the EMHRN
- \* Establish a calendar of main human rights related events in the various partner countries.
- \* Establish a report of the mission and on this basis establish a draft programme for EMHRN country priorities to be discussed by the member base.

### **D. Thematic priorities**

The EMHRN has identified the following thematic priorities in its work:

- i. The protection of human rights defenders, including freedom of association and expression
- ii. Justice and equal access to justice
- iii. Women's rights



- iv. Migrants' and asylum seekers rights, and human exchange
- v. Human rights education
- vi. Self-determination and the rights of refugees
- vii. Economic, social and cultural rights

#### **i. Protection of Human Rights Defenders, including freedom of association and freedom of expression**

Civil society participation is crucial for the development of the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process, and human rights defenders are key actors in this regard.

Despite the commitment of the EMP to international human rights principles, harassment, repression, torture, imprisonment, etc. of human rights defenders is still widespread in the region. Furthermore, freedom of association and expression standards, key rights and preconditions for civil society participation in the development of their societies, give rise to serious concern in several South and East Mediterranean countries.

Thus, the transitional period initiated by the Barcelona Declaration, has yet to translate into a programme for protecting human rights defenders in practice and a working program for the development of regional standards and principles for the promotion and protection of freedom of association and expression, including adequate training and education needed for capacity building in this field.

The EMHRN initiatives in relation to a regional human rights mechanism, dialogue with governments and in relation to country priorities are an integral part of its work under this chapter. In addition, the EMHRN propose the following initiatives:

##### **a. Cooperation with international NGOs**

Human rights organisations have developed significantly over the past decades. Yet, resources are few compared to state assets when it comes to the combat of repression of human rights defenders. Therefore, cooperation and coordination of activities between international, regional and national human rights organisations is needed.

The EMHRN will call major international human rights NGOs working in the region for an annual meeting in order to discuss how to improve coordination of activities, as well as priorities for work in the region.

Furthermore, it will continue past practice of cooperating with international organisations and its members in sending missions to key trials, and with regard to urgent appeals.

##### **b. Foundation for Human Rights Defenders**

Funds are essential for the protection of human rights defenders. Even small funds can make a big difference, for example when it comes to: travel and accommodation costs for persons who are forced to escape their

country for a limited period of time; the purchase of a mobile phone when all telephone lines have been cut by the authorities; the purchase of fax machines or computers; economic support for the health care of ill persons recently released from prison; economic support to families whose members were sacked or jailed by the authorities, etc.

Human rights defenders are in need of readily available funds for such purposes. Therefore, the EMHRN will establish a Foundation for Human Rights Defenders in the Euro-Mediterranean region with a board consisting of independent personalities.

It will finalise a proposal for statutes of the Foundation before the 5<sup>th</sup> General assembly of the EMHRN, including the proposal that membership fees to the EMHRN are ear-marked for the foundation. Furthermore, it will urge funding agencies, private companies, political parties, etc. to contribute with the necessary basic capital.

### **c. Trial monitoring network**

Trial monitoring is a key instrument in human rights work. It is a main instrument in assessing the compliance by states with international human rights commitments with regard to fair trial procedures. Furthermore, it serves as a mechanism to protect human rights defenders and persons persecuted for political reasons.

Lawyers and NGOs have in the past years worked extensively in the field of trial monitoring in the Euro-Mediterranean region. However, no systematic exchange of information or experience has resulted from these activities. Neither do we find regular consultations between persons involved in trial monitoring in the South and the North of the Mediterranean. The EMHRN will therefore encourage member organisations and partners to run a seminar/ workshop with the aim of

- \* Comparing legal systems and trial procedures in the region.
- \* Discussing methodologies for trial reporting and for the follow-up on trial monitoring.
- \* Identify needs and methods for strengthening trial monitoring in the region as well as for increased cooperation and exchange of information between trial monitors.
- \* Form the basis of a Euro-Mediterranean network of trial monitors, and of North-South monitoring mission teams.

### **d. Freedom of association**

On 5-7 October 2000, the EMHRN is co-organising a seminar on freedom of association in the Euro-Mediterranean region in Casablanca with the objective to

- \* situate the question of freedom of association in a Euro-Mediterranean context and to review the current state of affairs;
- \* 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.

As a follow-up to the seminar, the EMHRN will call for a meeting of key participants in order to ensure implementation of the recommendations of the seminar.

In particular, the working group will consider how to implement proposals to:

- \* Monitor the situation of freedom of association in the region.
- \* Enhance the capacity of human organisations to promote freedom of association on a national level.
- \* Enhance the capacity of human rights organisations with regard to the strengthening of their internal organisation, to management and strategic planning.
- \* Raise funds to implement activities in the field of freedom of association.

#### **e. Freedom of expression**

The EMHRN will promote the idea of organising a seminar on freedom of expression in the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to establish a platform and working program in this field. In this regard, it will contact freedom of expression NGOs working in the region in order to explore possibilities for cooperation in this regard.

#### **ii. Justice, including equal access to justice**

The commitment of the EMP partners to create a zone of peace, stability and prosperity in the Euro-Mediterranean region implies the respect for human rights and the developing of rule of law and democracy. As such it demands bringing internal legislation into conformity with international human rights standards, and the just application of the rule of law, i.e. sound administration of and equal access to justice.

Most violations are today caused by unjust laws and legislation that run counter to international norms, as well as by deficits in implementing the law.

The latter often manifests itself in the:

- \* prosecution of individuals and groups for exercising their individual or public liberties under the pretext that they disturb public order or they threaten the security of the State.
- \* impunity of public agents or employees involved in human rights violations
- \* unfair trials and unequal access to justice in relation to individual freedoms and socio-economic and cultural rights.

In the South and East Mediterranean where democratic institutions are lacking, there is no clear-cut separation of legislative, executive, and law enforcing authorities. As such, justice and the administration thereof is subordinated to the political power, and is often used for repression of freedoms and liberties.

In order to set-off a dynamic in the field of Justice, the EMHRN will

- \* Promote the idea among its members of strengthening efforts to monitor trials on a local level and of strengthening legal advise centres
- \* Support increased dialogue between the North, South and East of the Mediterranean on how to work towards common standards in the region .

It will collaborate with the Danish, Finnish and Swedish governments on the organisation of a regional conference in April 2001 on equal access to justice in order to

- \* review progress in this field;
- \* reach an understanding of common standards and changes needed;
- \* discuss methodologies and mechanisms for the promotion of equal access to justice within the framework of the Barcelona process.

A group of experts should be asked to continue the work on the conference themes for one year and produce a report, the result of which should be discussed in a larger forum, eventually a euro-med conference on human rights and justice in year 2002.

In order to support the preparations of the conference and its follow-up, the EMHRN will establish a working group to support the organisers of the conference and the follow-up committee.

### **iii. Women's rights**

While the Barcelona Declaration considers human rights to be a corner stone of the Partnership, women's rights are hardly evoked except for the recognition of the key role of women in development and the need to promote their active participation in economic and social life and in the creation of employment. Yet, it is difficult to conceive how the objectives of the EMP can be reached without full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural and political life of their respective societies.

Today, this participation is seriously hampered by the inequalities between men and women that are inscribed in the legislation of several countries (Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, etc.); the state of traditions and mentalities; and the lack of political will of several governments. Although most of the EMP countries have signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, reservations have often been made that devoid the countries' commitment of any legal impact.

Women in the region are today organising to denounce the situation in which they find themselves; to claim equality and halt to legal discrimination; and to struggle against negative representations and social practices. Tens of women's organisations have seen the day of light in the past years, regional networks have been created and thousands of women involve themselves in the work of human rights organisations.

In this context, the EMHRN is co-organising a conference on women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in Marseilles, that originally was scheduled to take place on 27-28 October, 2000, but postponed to the beginning of year 2001 due to the situation in Israel and Palestine.

The aim of the conference is to

- \* Review the current state of violations of women's rights (institutional, social, and domestic).
- \* Assess government policies to diminish discriminations against women.
- \* Assess and review major initiatives by women in the region with the view to diminish discriminations against women.

\* Assess the major problems facing women in migration and in asylum.

\* Draw-up recommendations for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The EMHRN will base its future work on the outcome of the conference and contribute to the follow-up of the recommendations.

#### **iv. Migrants, asylum seekers and human exchange**

The question of migrants' and asylum seekers' rights and the question of freedom of movement and human exchange is a key issue of the Barcelona process, and a key area for developing the EMP in the spirit of solidarity.

Several organisations already work in this field to which the EMHRN will bring its resources in its capacity of being a network based in the North, South as well as the East of the Mediterranean:

a. At the Special Meeting of the European Council on the Establishment of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, 15/16 October 1999, Tampere, the EU approved the action plan of the High Level Working Group on Asylum and Migration which is intended to diminish migration pressure on the EU and which includes one EMP country, i.e. Morocco. Experience from implementing the plan for Morocco will be used in relation to similar plans for other EMP countries. Therefore, the EMHRN feels it important to monitor the overall effect of the plan for human rights protection and promotion of the Moroccan population.

b. The EU Council of Ministers has agreed on the wording of a text concerning readmission of undocumented third country citizens to countries from which they entered Europe.

The wording will be sought incorporated in future association agreements which in the long run risk to force third countries to strengthen border controls and tighten visa regimes and thus become buffer zones for Europe in relation to migrants and asylum seekers.

A main problem concerning readmission agreements is that very little is known about the South and East Mediterranean countries protection standards of political refugees and their handling of documented as well as undocumented migrants, and thus the conditions to which people are sent back.

Various articles, reports and testimonies tend to show that standards for protecting refugees and migrants in several South countries are worse than in Europe. Furthermore, the Arab Convention against Terrorism seems to be implemented by several countries against internationally recognised protection standards.

c. In recent years, several EU countries have legalised a large number of undocumented migrants (for example France, Greece, Spain, Italy and Belgium). In each country, NGOs have been active in monitoring the procedures and effects of legalisation, but it seems that no overview or comparative approach to the issue exists in a European context.

In order to move further in the above mentioned fields, the EMHRN will organise a workshop with the participation of member organisations, experts and representatives of other relevant organisations with the mandate to out-line a program for:

\* Monitoring the EU High Official Committee plan of action for Morocco in the field of migration.

\* Gaining comprehensive knowledge of the situation of migrant and refugee protection in the South and East Mediterranean countries including the readmission agreements between the EU and its Mediterranean Partners.

\* Discuss and identify needs for strengthened regional cooperation between human rights organisations, refugee organisations, migrant organisations and anti-racist organisations, in particular in relation to the question of undocumented migrants.

#### **v. Human Rights Education and Training (HRE)**

The EMHRN will build on the results of the Bray workshop on human rights education and pay attention to the need to train its members in human rights education to ensure the development of new generations of human rights defenders

The EMHRN will support the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies; 80:20 Education and Citizens for a Better World; the University of Essex, the Arab Institute for Human Rights and the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian in Lebanon in taking the lead on the promotion of HRE within the framework of the EMHRN. It will support the enlargement of the working group, and support the developments of its activities according to the guide lines of the Bray workshop, April 2.000.

In particular,

\* The drafting of an EMHRN Declaration on Human Rights Education - translating, publishing and disseminating it widely.

\* A project for taking stock of current activities and approaches to HRE within the countries represented in the Network. This project would, in essence, be a digest or review of experiences, current practice and methods etc.

\* Designing and publishing an annotated listing of human rights related Internet sites (possibly in poster format) and begin the process of developing an EMHRN site with effective HRE content for different groupings etc.

\* The organisation of an annual or bi-annual Summer school. It would be held in various member states within the Network and could address a variety of issues such as Arab-Western dialogue in human rights, women's rights, methodologies in human rights education etc.

\* Commissioning a human right "primer" or "reader" of key documents and writings within human rights.

Finally, the EMHRN will explore possibilities for the build-up of training programs in a Euro-Mediterranean context for new generations of human rights activists.

#### **vi. Self-determination and the right of refugees**

The question of self-determination and the right of refugees with regard to the Middle East conflict has been marginalized in the Barcelona process. Full attention should be given to the question as a key issue for the promotion and protection of human rights as well as for conflict resolution based on international humanitarian and human rights principles.

The EMHRN will promote discussion among its members in order to arrive at a strategy in this field and in order to identify how it can make a difference compared to ongoing initiatives.

A conference organized by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies in cooperation with the EMHRN (scheduled for 10 December 2000) on the situation of Palestinian refugees, and a forthcoming report on the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan, will constitute an important input towards identifying concrete action.

## **vii. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

The EMHRN will develop its approach to the main financial and economic aspect of the EMP, i.e. the impact of the future free trade zone, the MEDA Program and EIB grants on the promotion and protection of human rights, civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights, and the right to development.

The EMHRN believes that the future free trade zone will have a profound impact on the region, and that it is imperative to monitor the impact hereof on the human rights situation.

In order to build-up expertise in this field for the benefit of its members, the EMHRN will establish a report on the disbursement and effect of MEDA funds since 1995. In this connection, it will seek information on and evaluate the use of funds allocated for civil society projects under the MEDA programs.

It will run a training seminar for its members on the economic chapter of the Barcelona Declaration, on its ideological foundation, and on its relation to the human rights dimension of the Barcelona process.

## **PROPOSALS FROM THE 5th GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN, JUNE 2002**

### **1. On the question of the impact of the events of 9/11 on human rights**

- The Network should help promote an international coalition for the protection of human rights
- The Network should support initiatives linked to the International Criminal Court.
- The Network should draw particular attention to the effects of 9/11 on the rights of the Palestinian and Kurdish peoples.
- The Network should examine the new climate carefully, understand the effects upon its activities, and think up new strategies.
- The Network should also endeavour to promote the human rights agenda within the framework of the Barcelona Process; it should work to enrich its content and to analyse concretely the national and international initiatives undertaken, stressing respect for Article 2 of the Association Agreements in particular.

### **2. General Proposals**

Two issues were addressed:

- Organisation;
- Content.

Organisation

- Communication strategy: The Network should seek to reinforce its communication tools as well as its internal modes of communication.
- Visibility: The General Assembly expressed the desire to strengthen the visibility of the Network.
- Internal regulation and Statutes: The Network should finalise its internal regulation concerning the executive committee and the Secretariat. It should also revise the statutes so that the legal structure of the Network keeps pace with its development. Particular attention should be drawn to the issue of adopting new members.
- The Network expressed the wish to preserve its network status and not become an international organisation.
- The Network should seek to develop the sense of belonging and compatibility amongst the members. For their part, all members should be willing to contribute to the Network according to their abilities.
- The Network underlined that its members represent a coming-together of resources and expertise across the region - they should rally all the more after the events of 9/11.

## Content

- The Network should seek to favour dialogue between religions and civilisations.
- The Network should adopt a strong policy on the Kurdish question.
- The Network should attempt to reinforce access to funding for NGOs
- The Network should keep in mind its link with the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and focus on employing the opportunities afforded by the mechanisms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

### 3. Thematic Proposals

- On the question of human rights education
  - Publication of a collection of human rights texts in the Network's three languages;
  - Further development of the Network's Internet site and electronic resources;
  - Publication of an annotated guide to Internet sites dealing with Palestine and associated issues;
  - Organisation of a conference or workshop for sharing experience and working methods in specific contexts (teachers, women, diplomats, young children etc.);
  - Creation of traineeships and trainee-exchanges amongst different organisations;
  - Compilation and probable publication of documents on the theme of Islam and human rights aimed at breaking down Europeans' stereotypical view of Islam.
  - The working group will develop a human rights education action plan for the medium and long term and submit it to the next General Assembly with clear objectives, a budget and a timetable.
- On the question of the Euro-Med Foundation for human rights
- The Network should determine exactly what type of institution it wants to create - Foundation, Fund or Network - because legal distinctions make these groups very different.
  - The Network should clearly define the type of relationship it wants to have with the Foundation.
  - The Foundation should avoid duplicating other institutions.
  - Information and research must be gathered on the international financial institutions and national and regional institutions both in the public and private sphere.
  - Responding to emergencies should not be an end in itself for the Foundation and must not become its exclusive task. A management training aspect must be integrated, for example capacity building.
  - An upper limit must be fixed on the amount of aid allocated and small projects must be funded above all.
  - Thought must be given to the question of which authorities will be in charge of the Foundation, together with the issue of transparency and confidentiality where the Foundation lends its support.



- On the question of justice and freedom of association
  - The Network should produce a “map” of the current situation regarding justice in the region
  - The working group should ensure that this is followed-up by holding a seminar, drawing inspiration from the experience of the women’s rights seminar.
  - The Network should produce a “map” of the current situation regarding the activities and programmes implemented by the EMP.
  - The Network should focus its observations of routine trials, i.e. seeing how procedures are carried out and how justice is dispensed. Work here would also involve deciding what training tools are needed so that local people can observe trials.
  - The Network should contact Egyptian member organisations, suggesting that they draw up a report criticising the new law on associations. This report would lead to the organisation of a workshop to facilitate lodging a complaint at the Egyptian Constitutional Court.
  
- On the question of migrants and refugees
  - The Network should create of a working group with a mandate defined by its members which will report back to the executive committee and the General Assembly.
  - The work carried out should conform to the Trieste document and the vision defined therein.
  - The Network should seek to influence the media to present the situation regarding immigration and refugees correctly and honestly so that public opinion does not turn against immigrants and refugees.
  - The Network could lend support to regional NGOs so they can integrate issues of migrants’ rights into their work. Areas of intervention could involve education, women’s rights, women refugees and children. This could help strengthen the regional dimension of the Network’s work.
  - Report: participants decided that in order to follow up the discussion and make its conclusions more specific and concrete, it would be desirable to produce a report on the theme of migrants and refugees such as the report that was produced for the seminar on women’s rights. The executive committee should appoint the person/s in charge of carrying out this report.
  - The Network should lobbying policy-makers working in the area of immigration, and in particular should develop a European policy and strategy which would incorporate organisations working in the field (migrants’ organisations, unions, churches etc.) It is also important to lobby the European Parliament.
  
- On the question of Palestine
  - The working group will base its action on the concept paper adopted during the workshop.
  - The Network should observe the situation on the ground regarding human rights violations. This means sending missions and distributing information by human rights organisations on the subject of human rights violations and war crimes. Information would need distribution in Europe.
  - The Network will reinforce its activities aimed at ending impunity in Israel. It will undertake a feasibility study for a court to judge human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
  - The Network will work to reinforce the capacities of existing organisations in Palestine and Israel, and encourage the European Union to adopt a stance on Palestine based on humanitarian principles and human rights. It will demand that Article 2 of the Association Agreement be applied, and ask for suspension until Israel satisfies its international obligations.
  - The Network, through the working group, will establish a network of links with development agencies, religious and humanitarian aid organisations, international human rights organisations and solidarity groups, and will promote a vision for peace based on human rights and humanitarian law.
  - The Network, through the working group on Palestine, will campaign on the issue of Palestinian detainees and demand, in particular, the immediate release of Marwan Barghouti.

- The Network should work to make it understood that criticism vis-à-vis Israel has nothing to do with a rise in anti-Semitism.