



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

EMHRN 3-YEAR WORK PROGRAM

EMHRN 3-YEAR WORK PROGRAM

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. REGIONAL THEMATIC WORK	4
2.1 DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION, LEGISLATIVE AND JUDICIAL REFORM	4
2.2 CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND THE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (IHL)	7
2.3. GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS	8
2.4. THE FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION	10
2.5 MIGRANTS', ASYLUM SEEKERS' AND REFUGEES' RIGHTS	11
2.6 ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS	12
3. COUNTRY APPROACHES	13
3.1 COUNTRY APPROACH IN GENERAL	13
3.2 TUNISIA	14
3.3 ALGERIA	15
3.4 SYRIA	16
4. WORK METHODOLOGIES AND MEMBER SUPPORT	17
4.1 INTRODUCTION	17
4.2 EMHRN CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES	18
4.3 ADVOCACY	19
4.4 COMMUNICATION	20
4.5 MEMBERS AND PARTNERSHIPS	21
4.6 EXECUTIVE BODIES AND THE SECRETARIAT	22

1. INTRODUCTION

The current document outlines the EMHRN's work program for the next three years, i.e. from the second half of 2012 to the second half of 2015 when the next EMHRN General Assembly is planned to take place.

The Work Program aims at implementing the EMHRN's Strategy by suggesting a range of activities in support thereof.

The Work Program takes its point of departure in the fact that one of the EMHRN's main strength and added values lies in its regional character and its capacity to bring human rights defenders together from all parts of the EuroMed region.

Hence the point of departure for the EMHRN's work is its regional thematic activities as defined by the strategy, i.e.

- Democratic Transition, Legislative and Judicial Reform
- Conflict situations and the respect for human rights, international and international humanitarian law (IHL);
- Gender Equality and Women's Rights;
- The fight against discrimination
- Migrants' and refugees' rights
- Economic and Social Rights

The EMHRN will develop specific projects within these themes, several of which will be based on current activities and past achievements. This will be done under the supervision of the Executive Committee and in negotiation with EMHRN donors.

The EMHRN will also, as indicated in the strategy work more systematically at national levels. This is where legislative measures and state practices are most directly felt by ordinary citizens.

The EMHRN will in its work at national level prioritize the themes stemming from its regional work.

Hence there will be a two-way relation between the regional and national work of the EMHRN as the EMHRN's thematic work on regional level will be fed into its work on national level and vice versa. This should enable the EMHRN to provide a diversified response to human rights issues and situations within its fields of priorities.

It is important to stress that the EMHRN, on top of its thematic activities, will always seek to be present to defend its members and their work when they are at risk, as well as human rights defenders in general when they are under attack.

It is important to stress that the EMHRN as a matter of principle and method will avoid 'stepping on the toes' of its members by duplicating or bypassing their work. It will consult with members before

taking significant initiatives at national level and it will also avoid duplicating work that is well done by other international and regional organisations.

At the country level, the EMHRN will devote specific attention to countries where the situation of human rights and of human rights defenders is particularly blocked as is the case - at the time of writing - in Algeria and Syria, due to the oppressiveness of the regimes, as well as increasingly in Egypt, but also in Israel and Palestine due to the continued and steadily extending occupation. The EMHRN will also be active at the national level where the added value of the EMHRN in delivering support to democracy transition has been established as is the case in Tunisia.

The human rights situation in other parts of the region, including in Europe, may worsen over the next three years period. In this case the EMHRN will seek to ensure the necessary flexibility to be able to respond appropriately to these changes.

EMHRN's work at regional and national levels as well as its members' work will be sustained by advocacy and lobbying as well as communication outreach. The EMHRN will also conduct specific capacity building activities in addition to those that are already part of its regional and country actions.

Finally, it is important to note that the EMHRN will initiate a significant restructuring of the Secretariat and its offices in order to allow it to engage with full efficiency in the development in the region and the needs of its members.

2. REGIONAL THEMATIC WORK

2.1 Democratic Transition, Legislative and Judicial Reform

As mentioned in the strategy the EMHRN will develop regional work on Democratic Transition, Legislative and Judicial Reform on the basis of the current work and achievements of its Freedom of Association and Justice work.

2.1.1 The right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and the freedom of movement

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of the activity is the human rights values and international standards pertaining to freedom of association and peaceful assembly in the EuroMed region.*

*The **general objective** is to develop capacity for sustained civil society monitoring, expertise and action on freedom of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement capable of influencing policies and practices in this field.*

*The **short term objective** is to further develop the regional civil society instrument built up by the EMHRN aimed at monitoring the right to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and freedom of movement. A short term objective is also to support on-going work and campaigns of members and partners in particular those under attack, and to sustain advocacy and media work in this regard.*

Freedom of association and its related rights are prerequisites for the existence of democratic societies. Regretfully, in most countries of the South and East Mediterranean freedom of association is far from international standards and in some cases the situation is deteriorating. In addition rights associated with the right to freedom of association, that are key to the normal functioning of associations, i.e. the right to freedom of expression, to freedom of assembly and the right to freedom of movement are also under attack.

The EMHRN and its Working group on Freedom of Association have over the years gained in-depth knowledge of the situation of freedom of association in the EuroMed region. It issued annual reports and developed a range of indicators to evaluate progress and set-backs of this important right in the region. It furthermore high-lighted the situations in specific countries such as Turkey and Algeria and took part in alerts and campaigns to support human rights associations whose freedoms were threatened such as in Egypt, Israel, Morocco and Jordan.

The EMHRN will continue this work which regretfully remains highly necessary despite the revolutionary moments in 2011. Hence, the Network will

- continue the work of its working group
- continue to enhance the development of broad alliances with international human rights organisations and other civil society groups
- continue publishing reviews about the situation in the region and extend its work to also deal with the right to peaceful assembly and the freedom of movement that today are violated broadly in the whole region
- monitor the situation in the different countries of the region, support campaigns and advocacy initiatives, and conduct solidarity and/or fact finding missions

The **outcome** would be that

- Violations of the freedom of association and associated rights are met with a strong and systematic response
- Violations of the right to freedom of association, and associated rights, remain high on the agenda of civil society and decision makers for example on the occasion of bi-lateral talks between the EU, its member states and its Mediterranean partners.
- International and regional NGO support is mobilized when civil society organisations are at risk, and when the right to peaceful assembly is violated
- A strong awareness among decision makers and civil society in the region - in the North as well as in the South - of the necessity to enhance the freedom of movement

2.1.2 The Independence of the judiciary and justice in transition

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is international human rights standards pertaining to the independence and impartiality of judiciaries in the EuroMed region based on international human rights standards.*

*The **general objective** is to support civil society work on reform initiatives and transitional justice processes by enhancing regional cooperation and exchange between human rights NGOs, lawyers and judges aimed at supporting national initiatives in this field.*

*The **short term objective** is to establish a regional civil society instrument aimed at supporting local processes and initiatives towards reform.*

The EMHRN has built up a good track record in the field of the independence of the judiciary. It published regional surveys on the situation of the judiciary and on reform initiatives. It published reports on the independence of the judiciaries in Algeria, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan Morocco and Tunisia and succeeded in many cases to create local spaces for free debate about this issue among NGOs, lawyers, judges and government representatives.

In February 2012 it organized a regional seminar aimed at identifying the changes of the judiciaries and reform challenges after the outbreak of the revolutionary moments. Another item discussed was how regional work can bring added value to on-going work at national level.

No clear picture emerged from the seminar as to how to deal with the independence of the judiciary and transitional justice from a regional perspective as civil society in each country of the South and East Mediterranean are mostly engaged in national dynamics.

However, a clear recommendation that emerged from the seminar is to establish regional spaces where the situation of the judiciary can be regularly reviewed, best practices can be highlighted including best practices as to the reform of the judiciary in transitional phases. Another recommendation was to work on establishing a regional human rights training centre for judges and lawyers that, apart from providing continued education on international human rights law, could be a meeting place and informal networking forum for human rights progressive legal actors.

The EMHRN will work to

- Monitor the situation of independence and reform of the judiciary, and of transitional justice. in the East and South Mediterranean region while keeping an eye also on the situation in Europe
- Continue the work of its Working group on the independence of the judiciary the members of which are including members are directly engaged in reform initiatives on the ground or have direct experience from similar situations. The group will be tasked with monitoring the situation in different countries of the region, and following the developments in Europe, by issuing regular reports on the independence of the judiciary and transitional justice initiatives
- Supporting judicial reform and transitional justice initiatives at national level.

- React to attacks against the independence of judiciaries and its defenders.
- The group would also be tasked with monitoring EU and EU member state programs aimed at the judiciaries in the region as well as EU- South Mediterranean cooperation in this field.
- Finally, the group would constitute a resource pool for trial monitoring when the issue of the independence of the judiciary is at stake and for solidarity work where lawyers and judges are under attack.

The **outcome** of this work would be to create a standing regional forum monitoring, and exchanging experience about the independence of the judiciary and transitional justice; providing policy inputs regarding EuroMed cooperation in the field of the judiciary; and develop a regional civil society protection mechanism in the field of the judiciary.

2.2 Conflict situations and the respect for human rights, international and international humanitarian law (IHL)

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of the activities is the international human rights standards and international humanitarian law (IHL) relating to conflict prevention, management and resolution.*

*The **general objective** is to further develop a regional civil society advocacy forum capable of influencing civil society and decisions makers on the need for the EU, the ENP and EuroMed governments to set the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law at the heart of peace promotion.*

*The **short term objective** is to further develop the activities of the EMHRN WG on Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians to consolidate it as a key critical human rights advocacy forum on EU policies pertaining to Israel and Palestine.*

The EMHRN has over the years established a strong track record in its work on human rights and IHL respect by Israel and the Palestinian authorities in the Occupied Territory. The focus of its work has been on strengthening advocacy work done by Israeli, Palestinian; Arab and European human rights civil society groups vis-à-vis the EU institutions and member states.

The EMHRN Working Group has become one of the key reference points for EU human rights and IHL advocacy in Europe and it developed a broad network in Israel and Palestine as well.

It is also among the core groups defending Palestinian and Israeli human rights defenders when they are were at risk.

The EMHRN will continue the work of its PIP working group.

It will

- Allocate resources for the EMHRN WG to meet regularly

- Conduct research based advocacy missions targeting the EU institutions and EU member states
- Continue its annual trainings on EU human rights advocacy for European, Arab, Israeli and Palestinian members and partners
- Seek to engage on other advocacy tracks, for example vis-à-vis the UN institutions, Arab governments, the Israeli government and Arab League when relevant
- Monitor the situation in both Israel and Palestine within its thematic fields of concern and take action on human rights violations when appropriate;
- Support human rights defenders when under attack.

Project details of EMHRN work on Israel and Palestine will be finalized in dialogue with the PIP working group that met in Paris 12-13 May 2012 to define details of its strategy over the next three years.

The main **outcome** of this work would be enhanced capacity of 'civil society groups' to do advocacy work in relation to the EU and EU member states building on the same understanding of the need for the EU to act in respect of its Treaty bound obligation to respect and promote human rights in its relations with third countries. Another outcome will be that human rights respect and respect for IHL are intrinsically linked to the question of whether the EU should deepen its relations with the Palestinian authorities and Israel.

2.3. Gender Equality and Women's rights

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** is the human rights values and international standards relating to women's rights and gender equality in particular the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*

*The **general objective** is to promote sustainable civil society networks and groups of actors in the EuroMed region with capacity to influence civil society and decision makers to actively promote and protect the rights of women in the region as well as actively integrating gender mainstreaming into their work.*

*The **short term** objectives are to further strengthen regional cooperation between women's rights and human rights organisations and networks aimed at*

- *supporting national work to promote and protect women's rights during the current political transitions*
- *actively support women's rights activists and organisation under attack*

The EMHRN has over the past years developed a broad range of activities on women's rights and gender democracy aimed at influencing regional instruments that were set-up within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It was a key player in bringing women's rights defenders together to lobby the EU and EuroMed partner governments with the result that two EuroMed

ministerial meetings in Istanbul and Marrakech adopted work programs that, if implemented, would considerably strengthen the role and position of women in the region. In fact, the EMHRN and its gender group became the turning point for civil society activities related to this instrument.

The EMHRN also worked on its internal lines to strengthen its gender mainstreaming policies, and raise awareness among NGOs about the importance of using this perspective in their work.

However the discontinuation of the Barcelona process through the establishment of the Union of the Mediterranean and the advent of the revolutionary moments and uprisings in the Arab world made work on the Istanbul-Marrakech process obsolete.

Before the 'Arab spring' the EMHRN had planned a series of meetings in the region aimed at raising awareness about the importance of the Istanbul-Marrakech process. These meetings were after the advent of the Arab Spring turned into sessions about the challenges and opportunities faced by women where changes occurred.

The EMHRN will

- Continue this series of meetings in 2012 and in the first half of 2013 leading to a regional conference gathering women's rights defenders from the whole EuroMed region including the most important EU, EuroMed and Arab networks.
This process will aim at bringing the many initiatives focusing on obstacles, gaps and challenges to women's rights and gender equality together and arrive at recommendations and strategies for setting these initiatives into more concerted action.
- Monitor the situation of women's rights in the South and East Mediterranean region and support women's rights defenders work at national level
- Monitor EU policies and advocate for the EU to uphold its commitments to promote women's rights and gender equality internally and externally
- Monitor situations in Europe where women are marginalized
- Continue its work of raising awareness about the importance of gender mainstreaming as an approach to fight discrimination based on sex and promote equal opportunities for men and women
- Continue the gender mainstreaming process of the EMHRN based on a Gender Audit of the EMHRN

Project details of EMHRN work on Women's Rights and Gender Equality will be finalized in dialogue with the Gender working group that met in Cyprus 27-29 April 2012 to define details of its strategy over the next three years.

The outcome would be that women's rights regional networking is revived and actively engaged in concerted efforts at promoting and protecting women's rights at national and regional level in a way that is able to influence decision makers. An outcome would also be heightened awareness among civil society groups and decision makers of the importance of gender mainstreaming as an instrument to enhance gender equality.

2.4. The fight against discrimination

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** is the international human rights standards pertaining to non-discrimination, freedom of conscience and the fight against racism and xenophobia*

*The **general objective** is to develop regional civil society forums aimed at promoting exchanges on and civil society responses to national and regional policy initiatives as well as practices related to the fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia.*

*The **short term objective** is to build up a regional program within the EMHRN aimed at stimulating cross regional thinking about freedom of conscience and religious freedom*

The EMHRN believes that there are debates and issues today pertaining to human rights values and culture that are common to Europe and the South and East Mediterranean region and in which human rights defenders from all strands of the EuroMed should be engaged.

The debates turn around questions that are related to religion and citizenship (and hence to civil and political rights), freedom of expression and religious rights, the right to religious freedom and to freedom of conscience.

The EMHRN believes that it is important that human rights defenders in the EuroMed region take part in debates on these issues particularly when they give rise to discriminatory policies.

The issues mentioned above are not new ones, but they have not been dealt with systematically before by the EMHRN.

Therefore the EMHRN wish to establish a reflection group with representatives of EMHRN members and resource persons that should meet regularly over the coming years to discuss, reflect and take stands on how a human rights cultural perspective informs political debates on religious and cultural practices in the region.

The reflection group will be tasked with elaborating a framework paper for the EMHRN and steer the elaboration of a report on the situation of freedom of conscience in the EuroMed region and how it impacts on people's rights.

The reports should be launched in different countries of the region and the launch sustained by public meetings..

In addition the EMHRN will ensure allocation of resources in order to monitor and react to debates and policy initiatives in the region on the issues addressed above.

The **outcome** would be a raised awareness within civil society and decision makers about the interrelation of debates and policy initiatives concerning anti-discrimination issues with a focus on freedom of conscience, religious freedom and human rights and culture in the region; another outcome would be that a cross-cultural and cross regional civil society response is provided to policy and decision makers in the region.

2.5 Migrants', asylum seekers' and refugees' rights

Objectives

The **human rights framework** of the activity are the international human rights standards and international humanitarian law regarding migrants', asylum seekers' and refugees' rights, in particular those relating to the Geneva Conventions; the Convention on Migrant Workers and their families; the Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and relevant ILO Conventions.

The **general objective** is to:

- Strengthen regional civil society cooperation on policies, projects and exchange of information related to the rights of migrants and refugees.
- Engage in dialogue with governments and EU institutions on questions relating to human rights, migration, refugee and asylum issues
- Develop the capacity of local organisations in the South Mediterranean to handle issues relating to migrants', refugees' and asylum seekers' rights.

The **short term objective** of the activity is to:

Further develop a human rights based civil society platform for cooperation on questions pertaining to the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers including alert missions on emblematic cases of violations of migrants or asylum seekers rights.

The EMHRN has over the past years developed and implemented a number of activities in the field of migrants, refugee and asylum seeker protection. It issued policy papers addressing the EU, fact sheets and reports about migrant, asylum seeker and refugee protection in respectively the Maghreb and Machrek; it organised urgent missions to such as Lampedusa, the Turkish-Syrian border, to Israel and the Tunisian-Libyan border. It has actively broadened its network and cooperated with a number of partner organisations.

The EMHRN will over the next three years

- Continue the work of its WG. The main focus of the group will be on human rights issues regarding the relations between the EU and the South Mediterranean region in the field of migrant, asylum seeker and refugee protection
- Monitor the situation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the South and East Mediterranean countries as well as EU policies and main trends in Europe
- Send alert missions where urgent crisis emerge
- Support the development of a South Mediterranean civil society response to the mobility partnership suggested by the EU
- Assist new organisations dealing with migrants, refugees and asylum seeker protection in building up their capacities

- Monitor bi-lateral readmission agreements and advocate for transparency and commitment to human rights and IHL respect in these
- Monitor Frontex activities at the South and East Mediterranean borders of the EU

Project details of EMHRN work on migrants and refugee rights will be finalized in dialogue with the MAWG working group that met in Rome 19-20 May 2012 to define details of its strategy over the next three years.

The main outcome would be contribute to establish active regional civil society responses to EU policies and practices relating to its South and East Mediterranean Neighbours in the field of protecting and promoting migrant, asylum seeker and refugee rights. Another main outcome would be to have contributed to enhance South and East Mediterranean organisations' capacity to promote and protect the right of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

2.6 Economic and Social Rights

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** is the international human rights standards pertaining to economic and social rights.*

*The **general objective** is the setting-up of a civil society instrument and mechanism to monitor the impact of the economic relations between the EU and the South and East Mediterranean countries on human rights in the EuroMed region.*

*The **short term objective** is to initiate a process of mapping and analysing economic relations between the EU and the South and East Mediterranean and how these findings can be translated into human right work by NGOs in the North and South of the region.*

The EMHRN has for several years acknowledged the importance of dealing with economic and social rights. The centrality of the issue was confirmed by the uprisings in the Arab region that to a large extent were motivated by economic and social concerns. Today, economic and social discontent remains at the forefront of social movements and protests that can be observed all over the region.

The EMHRN has also on several occasions emphasised that one of the important issues in the EuroMed region is how the economic and social relations between the EU and the South and East Mediterranean region, including EU economic assistance to its South Neighbours, shape people's everyday economic and social life.

The EMHRN will over the next three years prioritise work on economic and social rights in the EuroMed region.

It will contribute to uncover these relations aiming at raising awareness among its members and civil society about how they impact on the rights of citizens in their countries, and how human rights organisations can work on these matters.

As the issues to be covered are numerous, the EMHRN will need to delimit and prioritise its work.

The EMHRN will as a matter of priority

- Map current NGO and institutional activities in this field
- monitor the situation of economic and social rights in the different countries in the South and East Mediterranean as well as main trends in Europe
- Organise meetings of a smaller task force with members and experts in the North and the South with the task of identifying the different research and advocacy strands that are relevant to the region
- Organise a broader consultation meetings with members and partners engaged in social and economic rights issues, and from there on define its research, advocacy strategy, and initiate a working group on this basis

The outcome would be a civil society instrument in the region to enabling human rights work on economic relations between the Europe and the South and East Mediterranean region.

3. COUNTRY APPROACHES

3.1 Country approach in general

The EMHRN has during the past years been increasingly engaged in systematic work with its members and partners at country level. Israel and Palestine have for many years been key priorities for the EMHRN, and since 2009 the EMHRN was able to develop specific solidarity programs with human rights defenders in Algeria, Syria and Tunisia.

As indicated above, the EMHRN will in the future seek to ensure necessary resources enabling it to monitor the human rights situation in each country of the South and East Mediterranean within its thematic fields of priorities, while also monitoring general developments in Europe.

In this way it will be able to assess with the members and partners how the EMHRN can contribute to support their human rights work within the EMHRN's thematic priority areas. It will also be able to assess how human rights concerns within the different countries can be brought into play in regional work. A top priority in this regard will be to support members where they or their work are at risk.

Hence, over the next three years the EMHRN should be in close dialogue with members and civil society resulting in a differentiated approach of the EMHRN from one country to the other.

One priority action of the EMHRN will be to monitor the situation in Egypt that gives rise to steadily increased concern, and define actions according to the development of the human rights situation there. The EMHRN will also send missions to Libya in order to identify Libyan human rights organisations that could qualify as members or partners of the EMHRN, as well as assessing how/

whether the EMHRN can bring added value to the construction of a new Libyan state hopefully based on human rights values and democratic principles

Should the human rights situation in some European countries deteriorate significantly, the EMHRN will also consider country specific actions in this regard.

A part from these general initiatives the EMHRN will pursue its specific programmes on Israel and Palestine as described above. It will also pursue its mission in Tunisia, and its programmes on Algeria and Syria.

3.2 Tunisia

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** the international human rights norms and standards, international law and international humanitarian law*

*The **general objective** the promotion of a vibrant civil society in all regions of Tunisia capable of influencing national human rights agendas and act on the international level*

*The **short term objective** to facilitate capacity building of Tunisian human rights organisations and networking among these while monitoring the human rights situation in the country; it is also to establish working links between these and regional/international organisations and bodies*

Shortly after the fall of Ben Ali, the EMHRN opened a temporary mission in Tunisia. It has worked ojn accompanying Tunisian civil society in its making with priority being given to women, youth and populations in the marginalised regions of Tunisia. It also worked as an interface between European organisations and Tunisian civil society and as an interlocutor of the EU and member states present in the country.

Civil society needs for capacity building and support are huge in Tunisia and the EMHRN has built up credibility and relations of trust with a wide number of actors in the country. The EMHRN will build on this basis and

- Conduct regular human rights and capacity building activities for civil society in the making in the marginalised regions of Tunis
- Focus it support on women rights, youth groups and the marginalised regions of the country
- Encourage networking between Tunisian associations
- Support the human rights monitoring of civil society groups and networking all over Tunis
- Develop interfaces between Tunisian and European civil society groups when relevant
- Bring concerns of Tunisian civil society to the attention of the EU and other international bodes such as the UN when relevant

The outcome would be that the EMHRN has contributed to the establishing of sustainable human rights organisations and networks in the different regions of Tunisia able to take part and influence

national debates on human rights and democracy and able to manoeuvre on the regional and international scene.

3.3 Algeria

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the international human rights norms and standards , international law and international humanitarian law*

*The **general objective** the promotion of a vibrant civil society in Algeria capable of influencing national human rights agendas and act on the international level*

*The **short term objective** support human rights defenders at risk by breaking the relative isolation of the Algerian activists; develop the capacities of human rights organisations in Algeria to jointly plan and cooperate in having access to international human rights mechanisms at UN and EU level*

Algeria is in fact the first Arab country having had its 'Spring' namely in the period between 1988 and 1992. The tragedy experienced by Algeria after the cancellation of the election process by the army in early 1992 is well known. This is one important reason why Algeria did not experience its second 'Spring' following the outbreak of the Tunisian Jasmine revolution despite the existence of huge economic, social and political discontent in the population.

The EMHRN has since 2009 worked to develop its solidarity program with Algerian human rights defenders. It held several strategy meetings with members and partners. It organised missions to the country, including trial observations, and meetings in Brussels where Algerian human rights defenders could raise awareness in the European institutions and among member states about the serious situation in the country.

The EMHRN also worked to strengthen solidarity bonds between Algerian and European human rights defenders.

Despite the problems EMHRN's work is facing caused entry bans on several staff and Executive Committee members, the EMHRN will continue its support for Algerian human rights defenders

It will

- Organise solidarity group meetings between Algerian and EuroMed human rights organisations
- Contribute to strengthening links between professional groups (trade unions et.al.) in Europe and Algeria
- Send trial monitoring and solidarity missions to Algeria
- Assist Algerian human rights defenders in building-up a pool of Algerian human rights lawyers to assist victims of human rights violations
- Conduct educational activities built on the needs expressed by members and partners

- Conduct advocacy and awareness raising activities in relation to EU, EU member states and UN bodies

The outcome should be heightened awareness in the EU, EU member states, UN bodies and EuroMed civil society about the human rights situation in Algeria. The outcome would also be that Algerian human rights defenders are increasingly brought out their isolation through the creation of sustainable bonds with EuroMed civil society groups. Finally, the outcome would be the strengthening of Algerian partners' organisational capacity to work on human rights, and an increased protection of the human rights defenders when they are at risk.

3.4 Syria

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the international human rights norms and standard, international law and international humanitarian law*

*The **general objective** the promotion of a vibrant human rights movement in Syria capable of influencing national human rights agendas and political transition*

*The **short term objective** protect human rights defenders at risk by mobilizing European and international actors in their support; providing spaces for Syrian human rights to develop coordination; provide capacity building on documenting reporting on human rights violations*

It is difficult under the current circumstances to plan activities beyond urgent actions in relation to Syria.

The EMHRN has been in close contact with Syrian human rights defenders over the past years alerting the public when they were at risk. It sent several missions to the country while the regime still allowed access to internationals, and it accompanied Syrian human rights defenders on advocacy trips to Europe, the UN and the EU.

Up to this day the EMHRN continues its protection activities while working to strengthen bonds between Syrian and EuroMed human rights defenders as well as Syrian activists links to professional groups (*inter alia* lawyers and bar associations in Europe and internationally). In cooperation with Syrian human rights defenders the EMHRN has focussed on developing stronger inter action between Syrian human rights activists and in developing their capacity to strengthen documentation work on human rights violations in Syria.

The EMHRN will, until a better situation arises, continue to

- Assist human rights defenders in need and under attack
- Alert the decision makers and the public when human rights defenders are at risk
- Support Syrian human rights defenders in their international advocacy work
- Provide spaces where Syrian human rights activists can interact, as well as strengthening their links to EuroMed partners

- Contribute to strengthen Syrian human rights defenders work on documenting human rights violations

The outcome of the activities would be strengthened interaction between Syrian human rights defenders regarding documentation and advocacy; strengthened relations between Syrian human rights defenders and EuroMed counter parts, including professional organisations; and stronger protection mechanisms for human rights defenders at risk.

4. WORK METHODOLOGIES AND MEMBER SUPPORT

4.1 Introduction

After the General Assembly the EMHRN will launch a call for participation in its Regional Working groups. It will prioritise participation of members who are actively present on the ground within the thematic fields of EMHRN activities. It will also invite resource organisations that are active in the relevant fields to join the meetings in order to establish as strong groups as possible, both content and advocacy wise.

The EMHRN believes that its thematic and working group activities in general are conducive to the capacity building of its members. The working groups are sites for exchange of information and experience between equals from all parts of the EuroMed region. They are further sites for in-depth discussions of thematic and country issues as well as sites for planning actions, advocacy, fact finding missions, and solidarity actions. Finally, they are sites enabling participants to 'manoeuvre' within a regional political and human rights context.

The working groups will as mentioned in the strategy document be composed of members having already a good track record within the themes of the WGs as the EMHRN believes these should be stronger sites for policy making and mutual capacity building than was the case previously. However, the WG members may need training on specific issues and the EMHRN will seek to ensure, as it has done in a number of cases in the past, that experts or resource persons from within the membership are brought to the groups for training/teaching.

Conducting activities such as advocacy, fact finding missions and solidarity actions are also ways to enhance experience and knowledge of the participants. Also here, the EMHRN will seek to organise specific briefings/ trainings for the participants.

4.2 EMHRN capacity building activities

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the international human rights norms and standards, international law and international humanitarian law including those pertaining to human rights education.*

*The **general objective** is to create synergies between different training and capacity building efforts within the Network and the membership and fill-in gaps where these exist*

*The **short term objective** is to set up a first series of training courses while making the training activities of the members known to the EMHRN membership*

As mentioned in the strategy document, EMHRN members are requesting additional training and capacity building activities from the EMHRN in fields where the EMHRN has built up a track record.

Hence, the EMHRN will seek to allocate the necessary resources enabling it to provide training and teaching offers to its members.

The EMHRN will first of all map the training activities conducted by its members and other relevant agencies, upload and update these on its web site, as well as informing members of upcoming activities in the internal newsletters of the Network.

Secondly, the EMHRN will offer annual courses/workshops to its members on

1. The human rights instruments of the EU, the European Neighbourhood Policy and EuroMed mechanisms
2. Gender mainstreaming of human rights NGO work
3. Human rights education methodologies

The latter will build on the past work of the EMHRN working group on HRE. It can be a site for experimenting on human rights education and developing policies in this field such as promoting the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education.

When the education unit is fully operational the EMHRN would be

- Providing a regular updated calendar of human rights educational activities in the region that is relevant to the membership
- Conducting annual trainings on EU, ENP and EuroMed human rights instruments
- Conducting annual trainings on Gender mainstreaming
- Conducting annual 'basic trainers course' on HRE methodologies and an annual 'advanced workshop' experimenting with HRE methodologies
- Providing trainings in relation to the different regional and national activities conducted by the EMHRN

The outcome would be increased capacity of EMHRN members and partners to conduct activities within the fields of training offered by the Network.

4.3 Advocacy

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the international human rights norms and standards, international law and international humanitarian law.*

*The **general objective** is to efficiently communicate EMHRN and members' policies and recommendations to the relevant international bodies such as the EU, the UN and the League of Arab States and ensure feed-back from and dialogue with these on human rights. It is also to ensure that EMHRN members are aware of these and can benefit from this knowledge in their human rights work.*

*The **short term objective** is to further develop EMHRN advocacy activities in relation to the EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy while broadening it to other international and national bodies relevant for the promotion and protection of human rights on the ground.*

The EMHRN has clearly gained recognition as being one of the key human rights and civil society organisations working on relations between the EU and the South and East Mediterranean region. The EMHRN's policy recommendations and those of its members have over the years increasingly been listened to and integrated into EU policy positions in particular by the European Parliament and the EU Commission but also by a number of EU member states.

The EMHRN will continue seek strengthening its work to influence EU human rights policies in the EuroMed region and pro-actively take part in dialogues and advocacy for strengthening political action in support of the many human rights instruments that are at the EU's disposal. The EMHRN will engage in the EU Neighbourhood policy, the action plans, progress reports, association council meetings and sub committees where human rights issues are raised. It will further monitor and push for the implementation of the EU's differentiated approach to each partner country. It will also monitor the implementation of the EU's human rights guide lines and the development of national human rights strategies.

These activities will be conducted at a general and at country level by the Brussels office of the EMHRN in cooperation with EMHRN members.

However, as mentioned in the Strategy paper, the EMHRN does believe that EU advocacy has serious limits when it comes to impacting on the human rights situation on the ground. It believes it is necessary to use other advocacy avenues with its members.

An integral part of the EMHRN's thematic and country work will be to integrate advocacy in the planning of its activities. Targets for advocacy will continue to be the EU institutions, but advocating also in relation to other mechanisms and instruments may give the EMHRN a stronger impact. Hence, the UN system, EU member states, the Arab League, or individual Arab states may very well be relevant advocacy targets. EMHRN advocacy will therefore be extended while keeping a close eye

on the interrelation between the advocacy targets and how lobbying one body can enhance the impact of lobbying other bodies.

Hence a part from keeping a calendar of EU activities, the EMHRN will also keep itself up-to-date with events related to other advocacy targets, in particular the UN system, the Arab League and EU member states. It is furthermore in the process of applying for eco-soc status with the UN.

The EMHRN has become accredited to the International Organisation of the Francophonie. It will take part in its events and seek avenues for advocacy, human rights promotion and protection in this forum as well.

The outcome of these activities will be that the EMHRN and EMHRN members' recommendations and policy initiatives will be increasingly reflected in the international and regional human rights forums, as well as in bi-lateral relations between the EU, EU member states and South and East Mediterranean Partners – and by extension EMHRN activities should get increased impact on the ground.

4.4 Communication

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the human rights objectives, missions and visions of the EMHRN*

*The **general objective** is to efficiently voice and communicate information about the activities and concerns of the EMHRN and its members within the membership, to civil society, decision makers and media*

*The **short term objective** is to develop the necessary resources to fulfil the general objectives*

The EMHRN has over the past three years increasingly reached the media with its activities and statements, in particular the Arab media.

Regretfully, however, its communication work was not as efficient as it should be for a human rights organisation of the EMHRN's size and nature. This was amongst other due to delays and problems in recruiting new communication staff and with the migration of its web site to a new server.

These problems are now being solved and the EMHRN is continuing to maintain a three language web site, issuing weekly news bulletins based on the press statements and reports of its members, as well as the EMHRN's own statements and reports. It is also issuing a large number of statements and press releases to civil society, decision makers and civil society, and it is issuing an internal newsletter to members and subscribers.

Nevertheless, EMHRN communication work is not sufficiently integrated in its activities and planning.

The EMHRN aims first of all to get its message through to civil society and decision makers aiming at informing and influencing these; an important mean to do this is to reach the media and by extension the broader public.

As a first step towards a stronger EMHRN communication work, the EMHRN will task a consultancy team with going through the EMHRN's current work and suggest a plan and reform of its communication work that can guide the EMHRN in the future. The EMHRN will

- Clarify its external and internal communication strategy
- Maintain and develop a three language web site and integrate social media in this work
- Issue regular press releases, statements, news bulletins and internal newsletters, developing its data base as to enable it to better target receivers of EMHRN news

The outcome would be that the EMHRN and its members' positions activities are broadly known by civil society and decision makers in the region and regularly reflected in the media.

4.5 Members and Partnerships

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the human rights objectives, missions and visions of the EMHRN*

*The **general objective** is to contribute to developing and supporting efficient networks of civil society groups rooted in human rights values that can impact positively on the situation in the EuroMed region.*

*The **short term objective** is to strengthen the EMHRN's member base and develop and develop partnerships within and beyond the human rights community working in the region.*

Since its establishment 15 years ago the EMHRN has built a good a member base and solid practice in coordinating, cooperating and building partnerships with non-member organisations, international and regional human rights organisations, trade unions, research institutions, other regional networks, etc. It also facilitated the establishment of new civil society entities, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Support of Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF), the Danish NGO Network around the Arab Partnership, and the EuroMed NGO Platform.

The EMHRN will continue to work closely with the EMHRF, and it will continue cooperation with the EuroMed NGO Platform. It will also maintain its active participation in the Human Rights and Democracy Network in Brussels.

Furthermore, it will continue seeking to coordinate its activities with international human rights NGOs inviting them *inter alia* to take part in its meetings, issuing joint statements and conducting solidarity and advocacy meetings in the region.

The EMHRN will also actively seek to include resourceful organisations in its working group meetings, as it believes members could benefit from encounters with these. As the number of themes the EMHRN is dealing with has expanded the potential circle of organisations with whom the Network can cooperate will also expand, for example in the field of economic and social rights.

The EMHRN will address the fact that many organisations that were absent in the Arab world before the revolutionary moments started are now present in the region. The EMHRN will look into what the opportunities this advent of potential new partners may provide in terms of networking beyond the human rights community.

The EMHRN will also, as a matter of principle, and when relevant, dialogue with representatives of political parties and forces on questions pertaining to human rights, rule of law and democracy.

With regards to members, the EMHRN will continue the pro-active approach of attracting organisations to the EMHRN while strengthening the balance between North and South organisations within its membership. It will seek to attract organisations from countries where the EMHRN is not yet represented. It will also approach organisations that work in priority fields of the EMHRN where its membership is yet not strong. Finally, it will pursue its current policy aiming at having one member organisation for each country with a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality.

The outcome would be an increased and diversified EMHRN membership over the next three years and a systematic integration of partners in EMHRN activities where relevant.

4.6 Executive Bodies and the Secretariat

4.6.1 The Executive Bodies

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** is the human rights objectives, missions and visions of the EMHRN*

*The **general objective** is to*

- *Implement the statutes and by-laws of the EMHRN in a transparent and democratic way, and ensure the participation of members in delivering the EMHRN's agenda*
- *Ensure gender-mainstreaming of the EMHRN*
- *Ensure that the EMHRN membership and strategy reflect one another*

*The **short term objective** is to*

- *Support the work of EMHRN executive bodies*
- *Further develop internal communication practices to ensure transparency and ownership to decision making of the Executive Committee*
- *Update the implementation of the EMHRN's gender mainstreaming policy*

The EMHRN will continue to ensure that the elected bodies are able to work in an open and transparent manner.

The Executive Committee (EC) will further discuss how its activities – and decisions taken - are better communicated to the members in order to ensure better dialogue between these and the EC in between the General Assemblies.

Finally, the EC will work to continue implementation of the EMHRN's gender policy as well as set-out guide lines enhancing young people's participation in EMHRN activities.

More specifically the EMHRN will

- Hold a General Assembly in 2015 with a main focus on trends that impact on human rights as well as how to respond to these, including evaluating the implementation of the EMHRN's strategy
- Organise three annual Executive Committee meetings
- Organise three annual steering group meetings aimed at supervising the work of the secretariat and assisting the President in his/her role
- Hold an annual meeting of conveners, political referents and coordinators of EMHRN working groups
- Finalise a gender audit of the EMHRN and implement gender mainstreaming initiatives on that basis
- Define a proactive approach to new memberships

The **outcome** will be the full involvement of the EMHRN's elected political representatives in the delivery of the EMHRN's activities.

4.6.2 Secretariat

Objectives

*The **human rights framework** of this activity is the human rights objectives, missions and visions of the EMHRN*

*The **general objective** is to provide administrative support to all areas of the EMHRN's work enabling the network to fully implement its strategy*

*The **short term objective** is to do the necessary re-structuring of the secretariat enabling it to implement the work programme of the EMHRN while being able to react to changing circumstances in the region*

The Secretariat of the EMHRN has grown considerably since the last General Assembly of the EMHRN. While the head quarter remains in Copenhagen the secretariat has now office structures in Brussels, Paris, and Amman, a mission in Tunis and antennas in Cairo and Rabat.

The EMHRN has recently commissioned a consultancy report aimed at looking into how the secretariat should be re-organised in order to service the members and executive bodies in the best possible manner.

Building on the findings of the report, the EMHRN will engage in a significant restructuring of the secretariat, amend its staff regulation and its organisational chart. This work aims at ensuring better integration of EMHRN work at regional and country levels, better integration of EMHRN project and advocacy activities and finally the mainstreaming of communication. This restructuring may eventually lead to the closing down of some offices/ antennas in order to ensure necessary capacity to build up a critical mass of staff in each office.

It may also in period impact on the EMHRN's capacity to fully deliver its working program.

The Secretariat will build on equal opportunity principles when hiring staff; it will implement staff development policies and staff security policies in particular for staff working under or travelling to countries in conflict or where pressure on human rights defenders is high.

The secretariat will also continue work to ensure further diversification of its funding sources

Finally, the secretariat will ensure the implementation of internal evaluation mechanisms of its activities. It will negotiate with donors to conduct an independent, external evaluation of its activities before the next General Assembly of the EMHRN.

The **outcome** will be a reorganised Secretariat that is geared to implement the EMHRN's strategy and work programme in an effective and efficient way.