



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

EMHRN Executive Committee meeting

Beirut, 22-24 November 2013

Minutes – approved

The EMHRN Executive Committee meeting took place in Beirut on 22-24 November 2013. The meeting was preceded by meetings with Elsa Fenet (EU Delegation); Michel Moussa (Chair of the HR Commission); Pierre Salem (Ministry of Interior); Rana Boukarim and Farah Salka (Anti Racist Movement); George Ghali, Elie Abouaoun and Dima Wehbi (ALEF); Maria Lindhardt (Danish Embassy); Elisabeth Zakharia Sioufi (Beirut Bar Association); as well as Zoya Rouhana and Hiba Abbani (KAFA Enough Violence and Exploitation) on 21 November 2013.

The EMHRN also used the opportunity of being in Beirut to meet with its member organizations, i.e. Ghassan Abdallah and Raji Abed Al Salam (PHRO), Wadih Al-Asmar (Lebanese Center for Human Rights), and honorary member Samira Trad for a discussion with the Executive Committee members on the current human right situation in Lebanon on 22 November.

PARTICIPANTS

Executive Committee (EC) of the EMHRN:

Michel Tubiana (President), Anitta Kynsilehto, Eugenia Papamakariou, Raffaella Bolini, Søs Nissen, Osman Isci, Isaías Barreñada and Mahmoud AbuRahma (EC members).

Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director), Karin Søndergård (Chief accountant), Alexandre Baron (Fundraising and Contract officer, on 24 November), Hayet Zeghiche (Communication director), Sandrine Grenier (Advocacy director), Mathieu Routier (Project coordinator, by Skype on 24 November), and Maibritt Nielsen (Executive Secretary, rapporteur).

Other participants:

Samira Trad (honorary member), Ghassan Abdallah and Raji Abed Al Salam (PHRO), and Wadih Al-Asmar (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) (on 22 November in the afternoon)

Absent with notification:

Nassera Dutour (Vice president), Moataz El Fegier (Treasurer), Alya Chérif Chammari and Ayachi Hammami (EC members)

AGENDA

1. Welcome - Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the EC meeting on 14-16 June 2013
2. Round on the recent political developments in the region
3. Meeting with member organisations in Lebanon
4. Report from the Secretariat
5. Financial report from the Secretariat
6. Restructuring of the communication, including the issue of the EMHRN's logo/name, and an introduction to management systems that could be of use for the EC's internal communication
7. Restructuring - an update
8. Advocacy
9. Fundraising
10. EcoSoc
11. Membership applications and membership criteria
12. Miscellaneous



1. Welcome - Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the EC meeting on 14-16 June 2013

Michel Tubiana welcomed the EC members to Beirut for their third EC meeting this year.

Decisions:

- The EC approved the agenda of the meeting
- The EC approved the minutes from the last Executive Committee meeting on 14-16 June 2013 with one observation only

Documents:

1.1 Agenda (*for approval*)

1.2 Minutes from the EC meeting on 14-16 June 2013 (*for approval*)

1.3 Minutes from the Quartet meeting on 24 September 2013 (*for information*)

2. Round on the recent political developments in the region

Moderator: Raffaella Bolini

Raffaella Bolini made an introduction to the round on the recent political developments in the region, highlighting that the different countries are more focused on their own national situation than the developments in the region. In Egypt for instance, it seems to be the case, and it is difficult to analyse the situation without being able to have a dialogue with the civil society organisations in Egypt. For that same reason, she welcomed the EMHRN's mission to Egypt in December 2013 that would enable the EMHRN to have a deeper discussion with the Egyptian civil society.

In relation to the developments in the region, Raffaella Bolini also mentioned the arrival of refugees at Lampedusa, the instability in Tunisia, the repression of the population in Libya, the economic crisis in European countries like Greece that lead to the lack of solidarity, and the raise of nationalist movements in for instance France. She ended the introduction by saying that the EMHRN could have an important role to play in relation to the different crisis.

The EC members then had a round on the recent developments in their respective countries and in the region highlighting;

- The worsening situation in Greece with continuous violations of civil rights, hospitals and schools being merged and universities being closed. Foreign organisations come to Greece now to offer food, clothes and health services etc. A very few asylum permits are granted and, due to the situation in Greece, the migrants start leaving Greece as they cannot afford staying there anymore
- Different corruption scandals in Finland leading to the resignation of the Minister of Development
- The economic crisis in Spain that has had repercussions for the interior/foreign policies as well as the human rights and fundamental freedoms in Spain, reducing among others the funds for international cooperation with 85% within the last three years. The population shows no interest in international affairs as it is occupied with national issues, in particular the reform of the penal code that is far more repressive than before
- The bombing of the Iranian Embassy in Beirut on 19 November 2013
- The difficult situation in Libya where there are no prospects of change in the short term
- The difficult refugee situation in Syria
- The recent negotiation meetings between the Palestinian and Israeli government representatives that does however not leave much hope of a solution.
- The impact of the Israeli closure as well as the situation in Egypt on the situation in Gaza; and the settlements and land confiscations in the West Bank and Jerusalem leading to weekly demonstrations
- The EU Guidelines in relation to the settlement products; previously settlement enterprises benefited from EU support, however this would be more difficult now

- The culture of violence and the non-tolerance for diversity and different opinions in Egypt

Following the round on the political developments in the region, Michel Tubiana said that the EMHRN should not forget that the human rights principles should remain the Network's guidelines. He added that in the case of Egypt and Syria, the EC has been reluctant to take stands which transmit a signal of indecision by the EMHRN which is an unacceptable situation for the EC. Therefore, the EC should strive at settling this issue. Marc Schade-Poulsen supported Michel Tubiana's view point and suggested to discuss the relations between human rights and politics, i.e. how do you turn human rights into politics at an upcoming EC meeting.

Mahmoud Abu Rahma also agreed with Michel Tubiana, saying that the case of Egypt was the most difficult one, and he questioned how it would be possible to discuss the issue without the EMHRN members in Egypt. Isaias Barreñada agreed that the lack of a position could compromise the credibility of the EMHRN, and he suggested looking into the possibilities for a discussion forum, possibly at Skype, for ad hoc EC meetings. He furthermore suggested the EMHRN to pay more attention to the social movements that were derived from the claims for social justice which led to the revolutions in the Arab world. Even in the transition periods, the social issues remain important, he said. Also the Western Sahara seems to have been neglected by the EMHRN and Isaias Barreñada suggested including the issue on the agenda at one point. Michel Tubiana agreed that the issue of Western Sahara could be discussed by the EC as the EMHRN will have a position on any violation of human rights, and the complexity of the issue does not prevent the EC from discussing it.

Finally, Osman İşçi suggested the EC to have a clear position on the issue of Kurds in Syria and Turkey. He furthermore informed that, in relation to the peace talks, the state delegations had visited Öcalan again, and the IHD had asked for permission to be part of a delegation visiting him. However, the IHD would need assistance in terms of peace talks, and he asked what the role of the human rights defenders could be in this process.

3. Meeting with member organisations in Lebanon

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Michel Tubiana welcomed the representatives from the EMHRN's members in Lebanon, i.e. Samira Trad (honorary member), Ghassan Abdallah and Raji Abed Al Salam (PHRO), and Wadih Al-Asmar (Lebanese Center for Human Rights) for a discussion of the human rights situation in Lebanon.

Ghassan Abdallah said that the situation in Lebanon is not stable, a bomb exploding only a couple of days prior to the Executive Committee's arrival to Lebanon, and it is influenced by the situation in Syria; the Syrians currently flee to Lebanon which also puts pressure on the Palestinians in the camps in Lebanon. The UNHCR's mandate does not cover the Palestinians and they therefore rely on the help of the NGOs, however their help is not sufficient.

Raji Abed Al Salam added that the PHRO is trying to extend its mandate to cover Syria and Egypt and the human rights violations that the refugees face throughout their travel, for instance in terms of human trafficking, verbal and physical abuses, and increased border control. He furthermore informed that the Palestinians living in the middle of the Syrian conflict who would like to leave Syria have to go through five check points to have their passport stamped. When in Lebanon, the Palestinians do not have any legal status; many do not have any birth certificate, cannot marry nor study at the university. The Lebanese government has said that it would find a solution to it, but so far it has not materialized.

Ghassan Abdallah informed that Palestinians cannot own property or build houses outside the camps so when their son/daughter is marrying the parents build a house for the couple on top of their house or besides their house. Some Palestinians abuse this system and rent out houses to the Sudanese. In some cases, the Lebanese government let the Palestinians do this; in others they enforce the law. Legally it could not be defended what is going on in the camps, but it is human that the Palestinians need more space, Ghassan Abdallah said.

He furthermore noted that the majority of the Palestinian refugees from Syria are in Lebanon, and only a small number in Turkey and Jordan. According to Ghassan Abdallah, the official position is that the Palestinians do not interfere in the Syrian issue although they are involved in the society in Lebanon. Raji

Abed Al Salam added that the Palestinians need to be covered by somebody to be safe and for that reason they link up to political parties.

Wadih Al-Asmar said that for the last 2-3 years, the political situation in Lebanon has been completely blocked; the government resigned in March 2013 and the Prime Minister has not yet succeeded in setting up a new cabinet, and at the same time, the parliament has renewed its own mandate and postponed the parliamentary elections from 2013 to 2014. Consequently, the situation is blocked at the legislative and executive level, and this blockage is due to the situation in Syria, some Lebanese being in favour of the regime in Syria, others against. Currently, there are a total of 1,300,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon which puts a huge social and political pressure on Lebanon, and there are many human rights violations such as torture cases, violation of refugee rights, including for instance deportation to Somalia.

Samira Trad said that Lebanon has not had a proper state from the beginning and the consequence is that there is no rule of law or judiciary in Lebanon today, but instead there is corruption at all levels. The Frontiers Center (FC) that Samira Trad represents deals with the issue of refugees, more precisely their legal status and protection. In the case of the Syrians, the costs of their permit is amounting to as much as 200USD/person which is a lot for a family of four or five, and the FC is pushing the government to exempt them for this fee. According to Samira Trad, there has not been any improvement of the refugee policy and the memorandum of understanding has not been updated. Consequently, the refugees are not entitled to any state security and protection, and they are threatened at any time with deportation if arrested, even if they have refugee status.

Samira Trad furthermore briefed the EC about a survey carried out by the FC on the stateless people, i.e. without any nationality. One of the categories included those who have the right to nationality by law (from the Ottoman empire) and who live in Lebanon but did not register in 1931; whereas the other category included those who were residents in Lebanon and had the right to opt for nationality but did not do it at the time. The second category (90% being of Bedouin origin) has automatically the right to register their child but after one year, the family has to go to court to do so. However, 90% of this category have a poor background and cannot always afford the administrative fee. Therefore, the FC is trying to have this rule changed.

Samira Trad told that, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, UNHCR and UNICEF, the FC will start a campaign for raising awareness on the registration of the birth of a child as well as the registration of stateless. Instead of focusing on individual cases, the FC will try to find solutions for the population as such as court cases can take up to 5-10 years. According to Samira Trad, the situation in Syria has an influence on Lebanon which also Ghassan Abdallah agreed with, saying that it was rather for the worse than the better. Finally, Samira Trad said that among the NGOs there is competition and lack of coordination and networking. The work of the NGOs is properly good but it does not have any support, and their voice and impact is minimum, she said.

4. Report from the Secretariat

Moderator: Osman Isci

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the report from the Secretariat (*see 4.1 News Exchange summary no. 69-70*) and invited the political referents to comment on the activities of the different Working groups (*activities are only mentioned below when they are not included in the 4.1 News Exchange summary no. 69-70*).

Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the Working group is becoming a turning point for coordination of advocacy in Europe, and their training sessions are well attended. Mahmoud Abu Rahma added that the Working group had presented a new strategy to work on accountability at a round table in June 2013. He said that it is a good sign that European civil society shows more interest in the Working group's work than previously. The Working group had also organized an advocacy mission and training/consultation on major accountability issues in Rome in mid-November 2013 that was attended by many Europeans and a space for interaction between EMHRN members and development organisations working on Palestine but not on the issue of accountability.

Migration and asylum seekers

Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the Working group would look into how it can get more structured and have a direct dialogue with the UNHCR in the region. Anitta Kynsilehto added that the Working group was supposed to have a conference with the UNHCR but there was unfortunately a clash of dates. In some countries, it is easier to work with the UNHCR than in others. On 1-3 November 2013, the Working group met with local organisations in Amman working with people fleeing from Syria and discussed the involvement of the UNHCR with them; some organisations have regular contact with the UNHCR in their own countries, whereas others work with the UNHCR on a case by case basis. Some of the EMHRN members would like to have a regular platform with the UNHCR, and Anitta Kynsilehto asked, on behalf of the Project coordinator, whether the EMHRN would like to build a long term relationship with the UNHCR. Marc Schade-Poulsen answered by saying that the Working group should wait and see if the first meeting with the UNHCR is fruitful before deciding anything.

Anitta Kynsilehto then reported back from the EMHRN's mission to the Algerian side of the Algerian-Moroccan border that took place in late June 2013. A report from the mission would be published on 18 December 2013. Following the mission, there was an intensification of deportations across the border, shortly after the mobility partnership between the EU and Morocco had been signed on 7 June 2013.

Anitta Kynsilehto also informed that, in early October 2013, the EMHRN had co-organised together with Migreurop and FIDH a mission examining the current migratory context in Greece and Turkey. In Greece, the islands are the main entry points for migrants, and once the migrant has got a paper from the police, s/he can travel to Athens and continue to other places. However, those who come to Greece usually try to leave again due to the crisis. In Izmir, Anitta Kynsilehto had interviewed Syrian families who try to get to Greece. Almost everybody had been pushed back by the Greek coast guards. In Athens the delegation had also met with the head of the coast guards. She added that now where the Syrians get a lot of attention other populations, like the Palestinians fleeing from Syria, seem to be forgotten. A report from the missions will be published in March-April 2014. Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the EMHRN's added value of its work around borders is to bring Greek-Turks and Israeli-Egyptians together.

Algeria

Marc Schade-Poulsen said that two General Assemblies of the LADDH that has split will be organized in December 2013, i.e. on 5-6 and 20-21 December, aiming at bringing their Statutes into conformity with the new Algerian legislation.

Libya

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that, despite the difficult security situation, a workshop with different organisations in Libya will be organised by the EMHRN by the end of January 2014. Eugenia Papamakariou suggested having a session on Libya at the next EC meeting to be informed more in details about the EMHRN partners in Libya.

Documents:

4.1 News Exchange summary (no. 69-70) (*for information*)

4.2 Work plan 2013 (*for information*)

5. Financial report from the Secretariat

Moderator: Osman Isci

Karin Søndergård presented the financial situation of the EMHRN to the EC; she noted that in general the financial situation looks good, however there are areas that the EMHRN could look into, i.e. VAT (possibility of saving money); per diem rules (national legislation being different from EU rules); update of software (to ensure internal transparency); training on budgeting; donor guidelines, and visualization of voluntary work within the EMHRN.

Karin Søndergård then presented the *5.6 Annual financial report 2012* (three documents), highlighting the following;

- The auditors have a clear opinion of the EMHRN's financial situation which is essential (page 3)
- The EMHRN has a small profit in 2012 due to the membership fees in 2012 (page 11)
- Division of expenses: the Executive Bodies' expenses are high which is due to the holding of the General Assembly in June 2012 (page 9-11)

- The EMHRN does not have many inventories as it mainly has minor IT equipment. The expenses are paid directly and therefore not included in the balance sheet but in the income statement (page 12)
- The EMHRN has 1,3 million EUR in liquidity and is able to pay salaries, activities and reimbursements without borrowing the money from the bank, also due to the prepayments of donors as DANIDA and SIDA
- The retained profit should be increased in case the EMHRN would have financial problems in the future

Following Karin Søndergård's presentation, the EC members present signed the *5.6 Annual financial report 2012*.

Karin Søndergård then presented the *5.1 Balance sheet 30.09.2013*, showing the liquidity by the end of September 2013. The EC had not previously received the balance sheet. She noted that the EMHRN does not take the funds as income before the end of the year, and the EMHRN would consequently not end up with a loss of 2,1 million EUR in 2013 as indicated in the document.

The presentation of the *5.1 Balance sheet 30.09.2013* was followed by a presentation of the *5.2 Budget and accounts 2013*. Karin Søndergård noted that the budget had been recalculated in September, taking into consideration the postponement of the recruitment of some staff members which would result in lower total expenses for staff. She also mentioned that the EMHRN would make a new agreement with the EMHRF on the sharing of costs.

Karin Søndergård then presented the *5.3 Budget and accounts for 2013 that are related to EMHRN Work programme* that give an overview of how the funds are divided on the different activities. This is the budget presented to donors, she noted.

Søs Nissen suggested including, in percentages, the expenses of the different projects compared to the budget for the different projects to see if there are over/underspending. At the same time, it would also enable the staff members to monitor their project expenditures. Karin Søndergård said that this information was included in the *5.2 Budget and accounts 2013* but she agreed to include it in the *5.3 Budget and accounts for 2013 related to EMHRN Work programme* as well.

Marc Schade-Poulsen added that *5.3 Budget and accounts for 2013 related to EMHRN Work programme* is a political budget and offers the possibility to the EC to see if the funds match political decisions taken. He added that in the budget, Egypt is absent but will be upgraded again. It is currently included under Advocacy and Working groups, he noted.

Isaias Barrenada asked why the capacity building activities only amounts to a total of 13,375 EUR, and Marc Schade-Poulsen answered that the EMHRN had planned more trainings, also in Lebanon, however they had been postponed for 2014. The EMHRN had not yet been able to locate funds for a training unit but would have to wait until the Network has ensured enough core funding for them. Sandrine Grenier added that some of the trainings are included under other activities, i.e. Working group meetings and missions, which may explain why the expenses are low. Michel Tubiana noted that it was difficult to handle that some expenses are divided under different headings.

Karin Søndergård then presented the *5.4 Budget 2014-2016* that had been submitted to DANIDA for core funding for 2014-2016. Negotiations are still going on with DANIDA, and there would be a new meeting with them in December 2013. She noted that the current revision of the wage scale might have implications on the budget. Also the new contract with the EU on Tunisia would increase the funds, and there would thus be some changes to the budget along the way. All the funds for 2014 have not yet been secured, neither for 2015 or 2016, she said.

Finally, the *5.5 Budget for 2014-2016 related to the EMHRN Work programme* was presented to the EC. This budget had also been submitted to DANIDA and would be updated throughout the year when the EMHRN gets new contracts.

Decisions:

- The Budget and accounts 2013, Budget and accounts for 2013 related to EMHRN Work programme, Budget 2014-2016, Budget for 2014-2016 related to the EMHRN Work programme, and the Annual financial report 2012 were approved by the EC

Documents:

- 5.1 Balance sheet 30.09.2013 *(for information)*
- 5.2 Budget and accounts 2013 *(for approval)*
- 5.3 Budget and accounts for 2013 related to EMHRN Work programme *(for approval)*
- 5.4 Budget 2014-2016 *(for approval)*
- 5.5 Budget for 2014-2016 related to the EMHRN Work programme *(for approval)*
- 5.6 Annual financial report 2012 *(for approval)*

6. Restructuring of the communication, including the issue of the EMHRN's logo/name, and an introduction to management systems that could be of use for the EC's internal communication

Moderator: Søs Nissen

Hayet Zeghiche reminded the EC of the current activities of the Communication department;

- database repair and setup of customized mailing lists
- web site restructuring (focusing more on thematic than Working groups)
- set up of an e-library on the web site, including the EMHRN publications from 1997 to date, and of a search engine
- set up of password protected areas on the web site
- media mapping including priority countries for the EMHRN
- increased visibility of the EMHRN by branding
- employment of staff

Following her presentation, Michel Tubiana asked when the web site would be ready and whether the Communication department had started to work with the communication departments in the EMHRN's member organisations. Hayet Zeghiche answered by saying that the technical skeleton of the web site was already in place, however the visual identity should be decided upon before finalizing the web site. As for the relation with the EMHRN members, Hayet Zeghiche said that she had not yet had the capacity to systematize it and it was thus done on an ad hoc basis at the moment.

Isaias Barrenada suggested having some kind of procedure in place for the consultation with members in order to know who receives what, and updating this information each year. Hayet Zeghiche said that the contacts of the Secretariat had already been included in the database, and she invited the EC to give their contacts to the Communication department in order for them to be included in the database as well. Marc Schade-Poulsen agreed that a formal procedure for the recipients list could be established.

Osman Isci said that the current procedure of the IHD is that the organization sends the EMHRN statements to their contacts and upload the EMHRN reports and statements on their web site with a direct link to the EMHRN's web site. He suggested the EMHRN to ask its members to make the EMHRN more visible on their own web sites.

Rafaella Bolini said that her organisation has provided new contacts for journalists and media to the EMHRN. However, the statements that her organization receives from the EMHRN are in English and would not be read if her organization did not translate them which they do with the most important ones. According to her experience, a good web site is useful; however it should be combined with mail accounts, Facebook or Twitter to lead the readers to it. Hayet Zeghiche said that the EMHRN's press releases are sent to the mail boxes of its recipients as well as to Facebook and Twitter at the same time.

Søs Nissen said that, as a subscriber, she would like to be able to select the subjects she would like to receive information about. Hayet Zeghiche said that the recipients will have the possibility of choosing which information to receive from the EMHRN.

In order to arrive at a new visual identity for the EMHRN, Hayet Zeghiche then presented the different possible logo concepts to the EC that would be changed into three logo proposals following the EC meeting. She and a graphic expert had worked on the logo concepts together, and she asked the EC for clear guidance in order to be able to move forward as the logo is an indispensable step to move ahead with the web site, business cards etc., Hayet Zeghiche said.

The EC then commented on the different logo concepts, suggesting to

- focus on EuroMed and human rights
- ensure that the logo takes into consideration the issue of gender
- ensure that there is continuity with the old logo
- check if other companies/organisations have logos similar to the suggested logos
- leave out the circle that could have different (negative) connotations
- work on the different colours, in particular the black/white component as composed to the smooth colours, as well as change the orange colour
- keep the logo simple and limit the logo to three core components
- consider using a graphic element coupled with the name instead of a symbol

As for the logo concept with *waves*, it was suggested to

- reshape the waves (not to look like tooth paste) and make them “rougher”
- try to include human rights in the logo as it currently seems to combine the idea of network and the Mediterranean sea only

As for the logo concept with the *tree*, it was suggested to

- rework the tree to the right that looks like people reaching up for freedom
- make sure that the logo will not confuse the EMHRN with an environment organisation

As for the methodology, Hayet Zeghiche suggested the EC to retain three possible logos, and she asked the EC whether the EMHRN members should be involved in the process. Michel Tubiana thought that only the EC and the Secretariat should be consulted on the logo and that it would be counterproductive to consult all EMHRN members on the logo, in particular as other things, for instance the development of the web site, are waiting for the logo to be finalized. The consultation of the members would also mean that they would wait until the General Assembly in 2015 to decide on the logo, he pointed out.

Following the discussion of the logo, Hayet Zeghiche presented a preliminary proposal for the methodology for the name search (see *6.1 Suggestions to name/logo*). In relation to the name search, Michel Tubiana stressed the importance of keeping the EuroMed dimension in the name.

Finally, Hayet Zeghiche presented different types of on-line collaboration tools that would among others enable the EC to have a faster validation process, reduce the email traffic, ease the access to information/documents, and react in a timelier manner.

Michel Tubiana suggested that the Quartet could look into the issue of on-line collaboration tools and their technicalities at their next meeting on 20 January 2014 and take a decision based on this. He was of the opinion that the EC members should have a simple tool that would enable them to be productive in their work. Isaias Barreñada suggested improving the use of the tools that are already available, for instance Skype, whereas Rafaella Bolini suggested focusing on tools for online meetings which would enable the EC to take decisions in times of crisis. Mahmoud Abu Rahma agreed that the EC should have a simple tool that would allow the EC to see the other EC members' comments in press releases but it should not be too simple either so there would be a need for changing it soon. Finally, Osman Isci reminded the EC of his proposal to have a transitional period in relation to the on-line collaboration tools that was presented at the EC meeting in June 2013.

Decisions:

- The Communication department should revise the logo concepts with the waves and the tree to the right and try to come up with a suggestion to an abstract logo
- The logo concepts should be revised in cooperation with the EC task force, i.e. Rafaella Bolini and Osman Isci. The suggested logos will then be sent to the staff for them to comment on. Finally, the EC will receive the logos by email and decide on the logo to be used in the future, this prior to the next EC meeting
- The name of the EMHRN will be changed to: EuroMed rights/ EuroMed droits/ Amal (first letters of Arabic acronym: Euro-med for rights)
- The Quartet will discuss the issue of on-line collaboration tools further and come up with conclusions for the EC

Documents:

6.1 Suggestions to name/logo (*for discussion*)

7. Restructuring - an update

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented four points for discussion by the EC members, i.e.

- a. Planning and evaluation
- b. Wage and staff regulation (*without rapporteur*)
- c. Mashrek office (*without rapporteur*)
- d. Paris office (*without rapporteur*)

a. Planning and evaluation

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the restructuring is moving forward. All EMHRN staff members participated in staff days in Tunis on 1-3 October 2013 where new planning and evaluation tools had been presented with the aim of finalizing them by the end of the year. The staff members start to think in terms of same categories and work within the same framework, he noted. As part of the restructuring process, the six months planning and the internal newsletter are being revised in order to match. In the future, the EC would thus have better tools in order to measure and quantify the activities of the EMHRN.

Decisions:

- The Paris office will remain, but the office will not be turned into a representative office

Documents:

7.1 Restructuring - an update (*for information*)

7.2 Document on the Paris office (*for discussion*)

8. Advocacy

Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto

Sandrine Grenier presented the *8.1 Reflection on the EMHRN advocacy 2014-2018*. She said that, taking into consideration the crisis of the European Union, there is a need to develop and adapt a strategy for the EMHRN's advocacy that includes priorities and methodologies for the different themes and countries, and she asked for the EC's feedback to take the reflection on the EMHRN advocacy further. Following her presentation, EC members congratulated Sandrine Grenier with her work.

Isaias Barrenada said that it would be important to underline the importance and impact of the members in the relation to the Advocacy strategy, as seen in the Working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians. He furthermore suggested considering having a closer cooperation with the EU Social and Economic Committee that has some important opinions and its place in the decision making sphere in Europe.

Mahmoud Abu Rahma said that the Working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians has a lot of experience on advocacy work. He said that the EMHRN would usually work with institutions, the EU and member states, however it could be considered to mobilise the European civil society in order to mobilise the member states. According to Mahmoud Abu Rahma, it would be important to talk to trade unions, the media, universities and less formal bodies and raise awareness around issues that are otherwise not visible. Secondly, he suggested using the EU law as long as it does not conflict with human rights standards.

Eugenia Papamakariou agreed to involve local members in the advocacy work. She highlighted the Working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians' good work and results in terms of advocacy which also was a result of the involvement of the local members. If the members are not strong in doing advocacy, the EMHRN could help them to improve these skills. She also stressed the importance of making the results of the advocacy work public.

Rafaella Bolini expressed her hope that one of the priorities for the coming year would be the campaign on the EU elections as it could help the EMHRN to get visibility. She also agreed that the EMHRN should try to improve its alliances with other civil society actors and explore further cooperation with the EU Social and Economic Committee.

When the EMHRN has a meeting in the EU Parliament on a certain country, Osman Isci suggested asking the EMHRN members to go to the embassy or the parliament of the country in question in order to express their opinion and have a stronger impact. The EMHRN should not only have meetings at the EU level, but also at the local level.

Michel Tubiana stressed the importance of advocacy and said that advocacy is complex and multi-layered and has many themes and targets. The advocacy should be linked to communication, and the EMHRN should thus disseminate information and try to get the attention of the media. He reminded the EC members that their political decision had been to continue to focus on the EU and extend to the UN and other institutions. The EMHRN should try to reinforce the credibility of the EMHRN and train the EMHRN members so they are able to carry out advocacy activities themselves.

Søs Nissen asked Sandrine Genier to highlight the most important challenges and the priorities for the coming year, and she asked whether a plan for the Advocacy Strategy was in place.

Sandrine Grenier then summarized the feedback from the EC as follows;

- advocacy should not be limited to the political level but should be expanded to civil society and national actors (national governments)
- advocacy should be done in partnership with local actors
- the link between the communication department and the EMHRN members should be established
- public actions (public meetings etc.) should be developed
- a methodology to involve members more and build their capacity should be developed (Michel Tubiana and Marc Schade-Poulsen to elaborate further on this point)
- the biggest impact would be at the level of the members themselves – with the involvement of the members
- advocacy, communication and civil society should be linked
- the EMHRN should take the EU Social and Economic Committee into consideration

Following the summary, Marc Schade-Poulsen said that until now, the advocacy had taken place in Brussels and the EMHRN had brought members to the institutions in Brussels. However, the EMHRN has more capacity now and is having political reflections on the limits of the EU institutions. He said that a successful advocacy initiative would include members, alliances within the system, an analysis of where to obtain the best result (Parliament, UN etc.) and the method (silent diplomacy, campaigning etc.). The EMHRN's choices in this regard should be explicit.

Isaias Barrenada said that the notion of advocacy is trying to influence the decision of the power holders who either accept to be influenced (if democratic setting) – or cannot accept to be affected. This restrictive definition of advocacy is the most useful according to him as it scatters the EMHRN's aims and objectives. The advocacy should not stop at the political institutions but should include all who hold power. Finally, Søs Nissen suggested consulting other organisations on the development of the advocacy strategy and organise a work shop on the issue. The development of a strategy would enable the EMHRN to prioritise its work on advocacy, she noted.

Decisions:

- The Advocacy paper presented at the meeting would lead to an Advocacy Strategy that should be adopted at the EC meeting in June 2014

Documents:

8.1 Reflection on the EMHRN advocacy 2014-2018 (*for discussion*)

9. Fundraising

Moderator: Isaías Barreñada

Alexandre Baron presented the *9.2 Fundraising strategy document* that is covering 2014-16 and includes the overall objectives (without definite timeline) and specific objectives (to be renewed within the three years). The EC congratulated Alexandre Baron with his great work.

Søs Nissen asked whether Alexandre Baron had some ideas on how the EMHRN can build partnerships. He answered by saying that the EMHRN would have to look into this according to the requirements of the donors. In the case of the EU, they look for partnerships between European organisations and local organisations that will implement some of the activities of the project with a view of reinforcing their capacities. Søs Nissen said that there is a risk that the EMHRN would get into competition with its members. She mentioned that the Working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians has managed to raise funds, and she suggested that the other Working groups could do funding applications together as well, which would emphasize that the EMHRN is a Network and avoid the competition between the EMHRN and its members.

Michel Tubiana said that funding is depending on the EC's political choices. Thanks to Marc Schade-Poulsen and the EMHRN staff, the EMHRN has acquired a certain experience in fundraising, and the credibility of the EMHRN is very important in this sense. In relation to the partnerships, the EMHRN is already a partnership in itself, and the involvement of local organisations is at the core of any network. He added that there is a need to look for funding that is less restrictive as the less restrictions there are on the funding the more the EMHRN can remain independent. He noted that the EMHRN has more than two million EUR in advance payment from its donors but the EMHRN cannot start spending it, and the EMHRN is not allowed to take the interest rates of these funds. Another issue pertains to the level of the salaries for the programs that is fairly high, which Michel Tubiana thought was alarming. Finally, he suggested nominating the EMHRN for the Nobel Prize.

Alexandre Baron agreed with Michel Tubiana and Søs Nissen, saying that the EMHRN should focus on the Network as a partnership in itself and on the Working groups and their projects, however there are some formal restrictions, i.e. memorandums of understanding, that need to be signed with local members in order to formalize the partnerships. Isaías Barreñada said that there are many international organisations that are interested in specific projects and perhaps more short term partnerships, and it would be worthwhile looking into. Alexandre Baron said that he would look into the possibility of raising funds from multilateral organisations and the UN in the coming months; however the UN tends to give funds to the Southern organisations. Isaías Barreñada furthermore suggested including the perspectives of the donors in the document, including the dynamics between national donors, preferences for partnerships with organizations in the South etc. in order to adjust the EMHRN's fundraising strategy accordingly. Alexandre Baron agreed to his proposal and would include the donor's policies, objectives and dynamics.

Marc Schade-Poulsen clarified that the Network does not have the right to take any interest rate on the funds allocated by the donors – only the rates on the EMHRN's own capital. He added that the EMHRN had abandoned a project on discrimination since it was required by the donor to find a partner in each country which the EMHRN was not able to. Søs Nissen suggested the EMHRN to discuss the issue of reserve funds with Dignity and other NGOs' controllers in order to ensure a better overhead payment, which would be a way of building up the EMHRN's reserve funds.

Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that it should be considered what the limit to the EMHRN's internal growth is. Isaías Barreñada agreed with Marc Schade-Poulsen to start a reflection on the growth and an optimization of the current activities, and he suggested doing this at the next EC meeting. Rafaella Bolini agreed that there should be a limit to the EMHRN's growth, however there should be a possibility to raise money for new activities. Taking the EuroMed Civil Forum as an example, she noted that it cooperates with its different members on the implementation of the project. Søs Nissen was not concerned that the EMHRN is growing and thought that the EMHRN should take up the challenge of introducing work on EcoSoc and focus on getting young members in the Network in line with its Strategy.

Finally, Mahmoud Abu Rahma said that he thought that it was a matter of concern that the EMHRN is growing. He added that it would be important to consider the selection criteria in relation to local organisations before selecting partner organisations among the EMHRN members as it could be a sensitive issue.

Decisions:

- The Fundraising Strategy was adopted
- The Secretariat should look into how to increase the reserve funds at a later stage

Documents:

9.1 Fundraising update (*for information*)

9.2 Fundraising strategy document (*for discussion*)

10. EcoSoc

Moderator: Mahmoud Abu Rahma

Marc Schade-Poulsen reminded the EC that EcoSoc has been included in the EMHRN Strategy for some time but the Network never managed to work systematically on the issue. The EMHRN work on EcoSoc in recent years counts a report on the EU MEDA funds, a seminar in Florence, a project with trade unions and NGOs on the right to work and unemployment in the Mediterranean, and a report after the revolution in Tunisia that showed that there is little thinking in the political class in relation to EcoSoc. Marc Schade-Poulsen then presented the *10.1 Implementation of ESCR-related initiatives by the EMHRN*; the document sees EcoSoc as a way of bringing members in the North and South together at an equal level. He noted that the EMHRN work on EcoSoc is presented as exploratory work as the Network still needs to understand how to tackle the issue.

Isaias Barreñada said that EcoSoc are usually associated with cultural rights, and the EC should look into whether the EMHRN would work on cultural rights as well. However, the issue of EcoSoc is already a broad issue, and the EMHRN should identify its areas of work from the beginning and avoid duplicating the work of others. He suggested involving the EMHRN members in the process and taking the point of departure in their experience with EcoSoc. As for the methodology, the document presented suggests holding a seminar for members and non-members on EcoSoc in the region, possibly in the second half of 2014, to clarify the EMHRN's strategy in that regard and identify some partners. It was also suggested to do a mapping to know who does what in relation to EcoSoc. The seminar would enable the EMHRN to gather enough elements to move ahead with the set-up of a Working group on EcoSoc, Isaias Barreñada said. Marc Schade-Poulsen added that Ford Foundation seems willing to co-fund an initiative on regional dialogue on EcoSoc. However, it should be concretized which issues should be discussed at the seminar.

Søs Nissen suggested that the starting point of the EMHRN's work on EcoSoc should be a consultation round with the EMHRN members to get to know their interests and partners, and she agreed to the idea of doing a mapping of international organizations and trade unions' initiatives in terms of EcoSoc prior to a seminar. Also MS Action Aid in Denmark might be interested in working with the EMHRN on this issue. Osman Isci agreed with the idea of consulting the trade unions, being experts in this field.

Michel Tubiana agreed to the idea of doing a mapping, and he noted that cultural rights should be part of the EMHRN's work on Discrimination, whereas the EcoSoc should be present in all Working groups as a transversal issue in line with the gender issue which also Anitta Kynsilehto agreed with. Eugenia Papamakariou agreed with Michel Tubiana to focus only on EcoSoc – and not cultural rights – as it is a broad issue. She also thought that it was important to have a clear idea of what the Working group on EcoSoc should deal with and achieve, and she was of the opinion that the EMHRN's added value would be that the Network can work both in the North and the South. Marc Schade-Poulsen agreed with her saying that the Working group could bring organizations in the North and the South with mutual interests closer together. The Working group should strive at providing the EMHRN members with some instruments in order to deal with EcoSoc in their daily life.

Rafaella Bolini said that a lot of NGOs work on development but they are only focusing on the South. However the problem of achieving EcoSoc is similar in the North and the South. She added that there is no democracy without EcoSoc, and she suggested linking democracy and EcoSoc. Finally, Isaias Barreñada suggested making an analysis of what happened after the revolutions in the Arab world in terms of EcoSoc, the EU's reaction to it, and the feedback of the different governments. Usually, political assessments and not EcoSoc assessments are being carried out. This would be useful in order to identify what is missing and be able to establish a Working group on EcoSoc.

Decisions:

- The EMHRN will launch its work on EcoSoc (without including cultural rights); first the EMHRN will do a mapping to see where the EMHRN can have an added value.
- The mapping will be followed by a seminar to see how to mainstream EcoSoc within the EMHRN and to look into the context of the EU relations with the South.
- At the end of the process, the EMHRN will establish a Working group on EcoSoc.
- The Secretariat will ask Ford Foundation to fund the mapping and the seminar

Documents:

10.1 Implementation of ESCR-related initiatives by the EMHRN (*for discussion*)

11.Membership applications and membership criteria

Moderator: Eugenia Papamakariou

a. Membership criteria

Michel Tubiana said that the *11.1 Edited By laws (paragraph edited on membership criteria)* was a result of the discussions on the adoption of new members that had taken place since the General Assembly in 2012. Marc Schade-Poulsen asked for the reasons why the exclusion of members had not been included in the edited by laws. Michel Tubiana explained that the adoption of members is done on the basis of the Bylaws whereas the exclusion of members is done on the basis of the Statutes. Only the General Assembly – and not the EC – can amend the Statutes. In the future, the General Assembly should set the ceiling of the total EMHRN members, he said.

Søs Nissen said that ideally, the EMHRN should have more members from different countries, however if some countries do not have four members, it might have as a result that other countries would have more than four members. The ratio of 60-40% members from the South/North would easily change if the EMHRN is open for more members from the South. Marc Schade-Poulsen answered Søs Nissen by saying that the EMHRN would respect the ratio, and that there is a possibility of adopting new members from the South if there is also an increase of members in the North.

Isaias Barreñada said that the EMHRN should enable the countries that are not yet represented to increase their number of members, however without blocking an increase of members in other countries. He said that the increase of members in the South would require an increase in the participation from the North to respect the ratio. The EMHRN would thus not close any doors which is positive. Michel Tubiana noted that a member is costly and therefore, the EC should impose some limits for the increase of members.

Decisions:

- The EC adopted a new paragraph on the Membership criteria in the By Laws.
- In the future, the General Assembly will set the maximum number of organisations in the EMHRN, and there should be a balance of membership organisations from the North and South equal to a ratio of 60-40%. The EMHRN can now have 5 organisations in one country provided that there is less than 4 organisations in another country
- The EC will discuss the issue of exclusion of members and possible suggestions to amendments of the Statutes at their next meeting

Documents:

11.1 Edited By laws (paragraph edited on membership criteria) (*for discussion*)

11.2 Membership overview (*for information*)

11.3 Membership application overview (*for information*)

11.4 Pending applications (*for adoption*)

12.Miscellaneous

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

a. Dates and venues for the EC meetings in 2014

The EC agreed on the following dates and venues for the EC meetings in 2014;

- 7-9 March (United Kingdom was suggested as the venue for the March meeting, however Mahmoud Abu Rahma would have difficulties obtaining a visa for the United Kingdom in March 2014, and the EC would consequently have to find another venue)
- 6-8 June: Morocco
- 24-26 October: Brussels

b. Presentations at EC meetings

Søs Nissen suggested having shorter presentations (max. 10 minutes) at the coming EC meetings and instead having more lively discussions, assuming that all EC members would have read the documents distributed prior to the meetings. Michel Tubiana agreed to her suggestion.