



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

EMHRN Executive Committee meeting

Berlin, 7-9 March

Minutes – *approved*

The EMHRN Executive Committee meeting took place in Berlin on 7-9 March 2014 and thus gathered the EC members on the International Women's Day on 8 March 2014.

The EC meeting was preceded by a meeting with Barbara Unmuessig, Co-President of Heinrich Böll Stiftung, on 7 March 2014. The Executive Committee also invited the German civil society for a Working dinner on 7 March 2014 in order to discuss Germany's role in the EuroMed region. The representatives from the German civil society included Beate Ziegler, Forum Menschenrechte; Sieglinde Weinbrenner, Brot für die Welt; Tsafir Cohen, Medico International; Anne Kling, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights; Ruth Jüttner, Amnesty; Helmut Dietrich, Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration (FFM); and Sacha de Wijs, Crisis Action.

The EMHRN also used the opportunity of being in Berlin to meet with Human rights Commissioner Christoph Strässer on 10 March 2014. The desk officers of Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria also took part in this meeting.

PARTICIPANTS

Executive Committee (EC) of the EMHRN:

Michel Tubiana (President), Nassera Dutour (Vice president), Moataz El Fegier (Treasurer), Alya Chérif Chamari, Ayachi Hammami, Anitta Kynsilehto, Eugenia Papamakariou, Søs Nissen, Osman Isci, Isaías Barreñada (EC members).

Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director), Vassia Spanaki (Communication assistant, on 8 March), Shadia El Dardiry (Migration Program officer, on 9 March), Ramy Salhi (Head of Office Tunis) and Maibritt Nielsen (Executive Secretary, rapporteur).

Other participants:

Beate Ziegler, Forum Menschenrechte; Sieglinde Weinbrenner, Brot für die Welt; Tsafir Cohen, Medico International; Anne Kling, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights; Ruth Jüttner, Amnesty; Helmut Dietrich, Forschungsgesellschaft Flucht und Migration (FFM); and Sacha de Wijs, Crisis Action (Working dinner, on 7 March in the evening)

Absent with notification:

Raffaella Bolini and Mahmoud Abu Rahma (EC members)

AGENDA

1. Welcome - Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the EC meeting on 22-24 November 2013
2. Round on the recent political developments in the region
3. Public event addressing German civil society: Politics and human rights in the EuroMed region ("working dinner")
4. Report from the Secretariat
5. Financial report from the Secretariat, including fundraising
6. The work of the Sub-regional office in Tunisia
7. Restructuring of the communication, including training on on-line collaboration tools suggested by the Quartet following their meeting on 20 January 2014

8. Restructuring of the EMHRN - an update
9. Planning for the next General Assembly 2015
10. Possible suggestions to amendments of the Statutes regarding exclusions. Withdrawal of the member organisations the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and Iraqi Human Rights Association, as well as Per Stadig and Negad El-Borai (honorary members)
11. The Migration program
12. Miscellaneous



1. Welcome - Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the EC meeting on 22-24 November 2013

Michel Tubiana welcomed the EC members to Berlin for their first EC meeting this year. He expressed his hope to have all EC members gathered at the future EC meetings.

Decisions:

- The EC approved the agenda of the meeting
- The EC approved the minutes from the last Executive Committee meeting on 22-24 November 2013 without any observations

Documents:

- 1.1 Agenda (*for approval*)
- 1.2 Minutes from the EC meeting on 22-24 November 2013 (*for approval*)
- 1.3 Minutes from the Quartet meeting on 20 January 2014 (*for information*)

2. Round on the recent political developments in the region

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Michel Tubiana introduced the analysis of the recent political developments in the region. He noted that in relation to the new Constitution in Tunisia, the democratic secular movement had been able to find some important positions that had forced the Islamists and their allies to withdraw on some points. It still remains to be seen how the Constitution will unfold, he said. He noted that it would be a concern of the EMHRN to accompany the transition and election processes in Tunisia and in other countries in the region.

The regression in the transitional justice process in the whole region, for instance in Egypt, is however a challenge, Michel Tubiana said, and there is a need for every society to go back to its memory and revive it, an example of this being the Reconciliation Committee in Morocco. Morocco is now in the second phase where the judicial system is being rebuilt. Michel Tubiana asked which role the EMHRN could play and which contribution the Network could make in relation to the transitional justice in the region.

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

- The adoption of a Constitution in Tunisia, and the non-transparent signing of a vague mobility partnership between the Tunisia and the EU
- The hundreds of African migrants who have recently crossed the Spanish borders using force, which led to a national feeling of emergency in Spain and violence by the police in order to try to stop the migrants. This situation is a result of the migratory policy of the EU that has failed.
- The reform of the penal code in Spain leading to restrictions on the freedom of assembly and association; and the freedom of the judiciary being reduced in Spain
- The failure of democracy under Mohamed Morsi, the fragmented opposition, and the continuous oppressing of human and women's rights in Egypt despite that the Muslim Brotherhood is no longer in power
- The risk that the EU might legitimize the presidential elections in Egypt if the EU chooses to monitor them

- The isolation laws in Egypt and Libya, creating problems and being counterproductive as some groups of people are being excluded
- The polarized situation in Libya where democratic institutions are not able to deliver
- The tragic and complicated situation in Syria
- The attempts to revive the Union for the Mediterranean around the issue of women's rights
- The Russian intervention in Ukraine leading to the first reshape of borders since the second World War, and the EU's limited possibilities for intervention in this regard
- The Peace talks on Palestine that are not moving forward, and that might be delayed due to the situation in Ukraine
- The situation in the Sahel issue that remains problematic, in particular in terms of human rights
- The worsening situation in Greece in terms of the health and education systems, leading to demonstrations that are met with police violence. In addition, refugees have been met by shooting coastal guards
- The on-going violence against women, including women living in the Western countries
- The launch of the EU's structured regional dialogue in April 2014
- The emerging new young actors in the region which is positive
- The EU parliamentary elections which imply that there will not be strong advocacy opportunities for the coming 4-6 months

Ayachi Hammai noted that the social and political situation in the different countries in the region is very different. The EMHRN should act according to each situation and support civil society in relation to the elections and transitional justice. For instance in Libya, there is no strong central power and no civil society, and the EMHRN should help the emerging civil society. Ayachi Hammami then suggested organising a thematic week for each country followed up by a press campaign, for instance on Algeria during the elections. During this week, people could meet and come with suggestions to EMHRN activities in their country.

Ramy Salhi noted that the EMHRN should anticipate that in the coming years, some of the Southern countries will become host countries for migrants, and therefore the rights of migrants in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco should be enforced.

Moataz El Fegier thought that the EMHRN is still more a Mediterranean Network than a European Network and he thought that the EMHRN should work more with its European members, for instance in relation to the issue of racism. Alya Cherif Chammari agreed with him saying that the EMHRN is only shedding the light on violence against women in the Southern countries. She also informed that there is currently a conflict between the judges and the lawyers in Tunisia, the consequence being that the judges are currently not working and that the judicial system is paralyzed. She suggested considering this issue and the independence of the judiciary in the framework of the Justice Working group.

Osman İşçi informed that there would be elections in the Kurdish region in May 2014. The IHD will monitor these elections, and he suggested the EMHRN to send a fact finding mission prior to the elections. In addition, there will be local elections in Turkey in March 2014 as well as presidential elections in June 2014. He noted that transitional justice and the impartiality of judges in Turkey could also be issues that the EMHRN could respond to. Finally, he noted that his next hearing would take place on 16 June 2014.

Søs Nissen said that the EU wants to make a special policy on how to support transitional policies, and she suggested the Justice Working and the EC to discuss the issue and give input to this policy. Michel Tubiana noted that the transitional justice process can be used either to oppress the population even more, or as a healing process and a path to real democracy.

Nassera Dutour said that there are some common challenges and threats in the region, for instance the rise of the Islamist movements. She was not convinced that election monitoring in Algeria would be a good idea as there had already been some negative experience in this regard. She noted that the presidential elections in Algeria would take place on 17 April 2014, and that the situation is already tense. 103 persons had submitted their candidacies but later on withdrew them again. There is a rumour that the Minister of Interior will also withdraw his candidacy. A group of journalists is mobilizing to oppose the fourth mandate of Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and the Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria has also launched a campaign in this regard but also to fight for real democracy in Algeria.

Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the EMHRN, as one of the few NGOs, has been invited for a meeting in Cairo in early April 2014 between the EU and the Arab League, and he asked if any of the EC members would be able to represent the EMHRN at the meeting.

3. Public event addressing German civil society: Politics and human rights in the EuroMed region ("working dinner")

Moderator: Marc Schade-Poulsen

4. Report from the Secretariat

Moderator: Nassera Dutour

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the report from the Secretariat (*see 4.1 EMHRN Activity Review no. 1*) 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 EMHRN Activity Review no. 1*).

Gender equality

Alya Cherif Chammari mentioned that Michel Tubiana has been contacted by the Ambassador of the UfM in charge of women issues in order to see if the EMHRN could be involved in the organisation of the conference on women's rights in Barcelona on 26-27 March 2014. The participants have already been chosen for the conference; however, this projects discussed during the conference has no funding and needs to be approved by 43 countries before being launched.

Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

Eugenia Papamakariou noted that it had not been possible to ensure the Palestinians' participation for the last PIP Working group meeting on 14-15 November 2013 which she thought to be problematic. She stressed the importance of ensuring their participation as Skype limits the issues to be dealt with. She used the opportunity to express her appreciation of the work of Nathalie Stanus who has left the EMHRN.

Algeria

An exchange followed on EMHRN visits to Algeria and on the situation of civil society organisations.

Egypt

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that, together with its members in Egypt, the EMHRN had submitted a two year funding proposal to the EU Commission for a protection program for human rights defenders, including among others trial monitoring.

Visa for NGOs

Nassera Dutour informed that a press release on visa for NGOs had been sent to the Algerian authorities and had been well received by the Algerian press. Alya Cherif Chammari presented the idea of launching a global campaign on the visa issue and freedom of circulation, taking into account that the Ministry of Interior in some countries have established a list of persons that they want to prevent from entering their country. Anitta Kynsilehto agreed with this idea. Michel Tubiana said that Algeria has been a special case as this country had closed its doors to the NGOs. The objective is not the visa itself but the NGOs' access to a specific territory, he said. Nassera Dutour said that the visa issue is of concern to several of the Working groups and the EC as well, Working group members from for instance Palestine being prevented from participating in their meetings.

EMHRF

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the EC that he is now being invited for the meetings of the EMHRF and would eventually be a board member, the idea being to bridge better between the EMHRN and the EMHRF. However during these meetings, he cannot take any positions on the EMHRN members, being the Executive director of the EMHRN. He asked the EC members to let him know if they found this double role problematic.

Documents:

4.1 EMHRN Activity Review no. 1 (for information)

4.2 Work plan 2014 (for information)

5. Financial report from the Secretariat, including fundraising

Moderator: Eugenia Papamakariou

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the *EMHRN budget and draft accounts 2013*. He noted that the budget 2013 ended with a small profit of approx. 8,000 EUR. Not all core funds were used in 2013, and SIDA has given the EMHRN the permission to transfer them to 2014.

In relation to the *Budget and draft accounts for 2013 related to the EMHRN work programme*, Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that 37,1% of the total budget were spent on regional activities, whereas 23,1% of the total budget were spent on activities related to countries. This percentage will most probably increase in 2014 with the EU-Tunisia project and the project on Egypt (see *5.1 Budgets and accounts (3 sheets)*). Marc Schade-Poulsen pointed out that the EMHRN Strategy says that the Network should upgrade its advocacy and communication, and this was reflected in the budget 2013.

Marc Schade-Poulsen mentioned that the budget 2014-2016 had not been included in the documents for the meeting; however the figures in this budget are almost the same as those presented at the EC meeting on 22-24 November 2013. He noted that there is an increase in staff expenses of 117,000 EUR amongst other since the number of staff members in Tunis has increased. As for the budget for activities, it has increased with 400,000 EUR in 2014, and there are further increases in 2015 due to the General Assembly. He noted that the EMHRN is currently waiting for SIDA to confirm the continuation of their funding in 2014 but it was expected that they would do so. However, for the activities in 2015, the EMHRN should raise more than 1 million EUR.

Previously, the EU had contracts for regional projects, however Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that this year the EU had not yet launched any call for regional proposals, and the EMHRN is currently waiting for the call under the regional Civil Society Facility that has been delayed with six months. The EMHRN would have to identify new donors. Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen stressed the necessity of discussing the issue of funding for 2015 in details at the next EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014 and if needed prioritizing the different activities according to financial resources available.

Eugenia Papamakariou pointed out that the projects that are lacking funding are Gender, Justice and Freedom of Assembly. She suggested considering an interim period for these projects. Alya Cherif Chamhari asked whether possible donors outside the EU had been contacted, including American foundations

Decision:

- The EC approved the *5.1 Budgets and accounts (3 sheets)*
- The EC approved the budget for 2014-2016 that was presented at the meeting
- The EC should discuss the funding for 2015 in details at the next EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014

Documents:

5.1 Budgets and accounts (*for approval*) (3 sheets)

5.2 Fundraising update (*for information*)

6. The work of the Sub-regional office in Tunisia

Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto

Ramy Salhi presented the work of the sub-regional office in Tunisia in 2013, highlighting the three strands of their work being civil and political rights; new actors in civil society in marginalised regions; and EcoSoc, in particular migrants and refugees rights. These are based on the recommendations that the EMHRN's members and partners have made at a meeting in 2013, ensuring that the EMHRN responds to their needs. Within these three strands, the Tunis office has conducted 63 activities, including meetings, seminars, trainings, advocacy missions etc., 50% of them being outside Tunis. In 2013, the Tunis office was able to respond to the changing situation in Tunisia in cooperation with its network of 50-60 organisations and partners, including both old and new actors. The Tunisian civil society prepared a road map for Tunisia and played a role as mediator between the government and the opposition.

Following a meeting with its partners in Tunis, the EMHRN established the strategic orientations for the Tunis office in 2014, and it was decided to keep the same three priorities, focusing on the elections in Tunis in

2014; capacity building of civil society actors (advocacy at the national level, EU institutions etc.) in accordance with the EMHRN's EU contract; formalization of the partnership with New Tactics; and the virtual NGO platform Jamaity that the EMHRN has established with different partners – setting up approx. 200 activities around these four focus areas.

Following his presentation, Anitta Kynsilehto asked Ramy Salhi to elaborate on the regional work, including Libya that the Tunis office is in charge of. Ramy Salhi answered by saying that he and Marc Schade-Poulsen are currently discussing how to reinforce the regional work of the Tunis office. A planned mission to Libya had unfortunately been postponed, however he would go to Morocco the following week to meet with partners and look for new potential partners. In order to enable Ramy Salhi to focus on the sub-regional work, a director would be hired for the Tunis office.

Søs Nissen said that the Tunis mission had started out with a broad mandate to support civil society, and now this support is carried out through more narrow sub-projects. She asked how the mandate of supporting civil society is interpreted, and what the added value of the EMHRN is in this regard. Ramy Salhi said that initially, the EMHRN had established an exploratory mission in Tunisia, wanting to support the emerging new actors, remote areas, women and children. As a result of meeting with its members and partners, the EMHRN got more targeted projects that answer their needs; however supporting civil society remains a major part of the EMHRN work, he said.

Eugenia Papamakariou asked for more information on the Tunis office's local partners, and Ramy Salhi explained that the Tunis office works with approx. 200 organisations that cover the whole Tunisia and all topics (gender, justice, prison monitoring, civil and political rights, youth, migration, minorities, discrimination etc.). Søs Nissen thought that the plans for the Tunis office are ambitious and she suggested downgrading some of the activities. She thought that the issue of migration and mobility was interesting; however the difficulty was to move beyond the usual discourse on the political situation right now and instead think more strategically in relation to the EU. Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that freedom of movement could be an issue to look into for the Tunis office.

Ayachi Hammami said that the EMHRN is becoming a centre of attraction in Tunisia and many of the activities are passed through the Network. In relation to the Maghreb, Ayachi Hammami asked if a strategy had been developed for the region as he was afraid that the activities in Morocco, Algeria and Libya would be forgotten. Ramy Salhi said that, with point of departure in the needs of the civil society actors, he and Marc Schade-Poulsen would make a strategy for the regional dimension in 2014, and the activities would be carried out in 2015. The challenge is that the situation is very different from country to country, making it impossible to have a common vision for the whole region. Marc Schade-Poulsen added that each country has its own dynamic and the EMHRN's added value will be different from one country to another.

Isaías Barreñada said that the EMHRN should be careful that the Tunis office is not turned into a network in itself in Tunisia which would not be in conformity with the EMHRN mandate. He was not convinced that it was good to have this large number of partners and whether it was manageable. Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the EMHRN had not been able to move forward in Libya, Morocco or Algeria, and it had been decided to move forward in Tunisia and let the actors there network. He informed that the work of the Tunis office will be linked to the thematic Working groups. Isaías Barreñada agreed that networking is important; however the EMHRN members should play a role in it.

Ramy Salhi said that the EMHRN has played the role of mediator, bringing the organisations in Tunisia together and making a platform for civil society that is still vulnerable. He noted that the EMHRN members are always present in the EMHRN activities. Alya Cherif Chammari added that for the last three years, a lot of NGOs have emerged, and they need the EMHRN's expertise to launch projects. This does however not entail that the EMHRN is transcending its mandate in Tunisia, she said.

Documents:

6.1 Summary of the meeting with our members and partners (*for information*)

6.2 Minutes of the reflection meeting of the EMHRN and the EMHRF (*for information*)

7. Restructuring of the communication, including training on on-line collaboration tools suggested by the Quartet following their meeting on 20 January 2014

Moderator: Søs Nissen

As a follow-up to the decisions of the Quartet meeting on 20 January 2014, Vassia Spanaki made a presentation of on-line collaboration tools and gave a basic training on the collaboration features of Office 365 to be used by the EC members for their internal communication. She informed that the EC members would get an Outlook account (initials@euromedrights.net) that would enable them to have common folders (EC meetings, press releases etc.), a shared calendar, as well as access to archives in Office 365. Once the on-line collaboration is in place, it will speed up the EC's validation procedures and ease the access to working documents. The challenge in relation to the EC members' communication is that they do not have a common language, Vassia Spanaki said. The Communication department will therefore follow the process closely and keep the document up to date so comments are included in both the English and French versions respectively.

The OneDrive in Office 365 will enable the EC members to add documents and send them to whom they want. The EC members will also receive a message from the Communication department, using the ec@euromedrights.net distribution list, when a document is waiting for their approval. When the document is opened, the EC members can make their own comments and see the comments of other EC members. If two EC members comment on the same part, a chat option makes it possible to make a final decision on this part. The Communication department will consolidate the comments and finalise the document. The EC will be informed that there is a consolidated document so the EC members can log in and see the final version in English and French. The Office 365 account does not entail that the EC members have to install anything on their computers as the account is web based. The costs of the account are 6USD/person/month.

Søs Nissen asked whether the Working group members would also have an Office 365 account as it would be a great advantage for the EC and Working groups to use the same system. Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that it was also foreseen that the Working groups should have a specific place for their shared documents. Michel Tubiana however thought that the EC members should test the system before it was introduced to the Working group members.

In relation to the database, Isaías Barreñada stressed the importance of having some clear instructions for its use to avoid mistakes and problems. Vassia Spanaki said that the EC members would be able to modify their own contacts only. One or two persons would be in charge of updating the database as such.

Finally, Michel Tubiana thought that the EC members should try the on-line collaboration tool and learn it from practicing. He noted that some EC members might need additional training in the tool from the Communication department.

Decisions:

- The on-line collaboration tool to be launched on 10 March 2014 and to be put into practice by 31 March, leaving some time for the EC to get further training by the Communication department until then (and if need be, also after 31 March 2014)
- Vassia Spanaki to send username and password to the EC members on 10 March 2014, including a manual for every language
- The EC members to test the system before possibly introducing it to the Working group members
- The EC to receive an update on the communication plan at the EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014

Documents:

7.1 Training on on-line collaboration tools (Office Suite 365) (for discussion)

8. Restructuring of the EMHRN - an update

Moderator: Ayachi Hammami

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the logo proposal that the EMHRN had received from the designer since the last EC meeting on 22-24 November 2013 was not completely satisfactory. Therefore, the idea is to use the current logo, however simplifying the tree and inserting it in a circle, making it easier to print. It would be important for the designer to have the font and the colours in place in order to design the web site, Marc

Schade-Poulsen explained. The form of the logo itself could be changed until the next General Assembly in 2015.

Michel Tubiana thought that the Communication department should move forward with this idea in order to be able to get the web site in place, although he was not satisfied with the reshaped tree or the process around the redesign of the logo. Alternatively, the web site would be postponed until the EC has agreed on another logo. Osman Isci agreed with Michel Tubiana to move ahead with the reshaped logo. He asked whether the EMHRN has a contract with the designer and, in that case, what it entails. Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the designer was contractually obliged to make three sketches which he had done. The designer had agreed to continue with the web site. Nassera Dutour asked for the reasons explaining that the designer was not able to present a satisfactory logo, and Marc Schade-Poulsen said it is often difficult to arrive at a common understanding of what a logo should look like.

Ayachi Hammami suggested launching a competition to art/graphic students asking them to design a logo, the award being for instance an internship at the EMHRN. Søs Nissen thought that Ayachi Hammami proposal could be used at another time, and Marc Schade-Poulsen also thought that the EMHRN could launch a competition when the web site is ready. Nassera Dutour pointed out that the logo would then be changed twice within a year.

Staff issues: without rapporteur

Decisions:

- The EC members agreed on the proposal for the new EMHRN logo, including a simplified tree in a circle

Documents:

8.1 Restructuring - an update (*for information*)

9. Planning for the next General Assembly 2015

Moderator: Alya Cherif Chammari

Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the EC should start the planning of the next General Assembly in May or June 2015, in particular as regards the dates/venue, agenda/theme, and the possibility of organising a seminar prior to the General Assembly. It would be important to start the fundraising for the General Assembly and find a hotel one year in advance of the event. At the EC meeting on 24-26 October 2014, the EC should also start discussing the agenda of the General Assembly in order to be able to start producing documents.

In relation to the agenda, Marc Schade-Poulsen said that the EC would amend the Statutes on the membership issue and present it to the General Assembly. This might lead to other amendments of the Statutes, possibly also the issue of re-granting funds to members which the Network is currently not able to do according to its Statutes. He also stressed the importance of ensuring good EC elections and encouraging representatives from the member organisations to run for the elections, paying special attention to ensuring parity. He reminded the EC members that an organization is allowed to sit for three terms.

Michel Tubiana said that the EC had already amended the By laws and taken a decision to amend the Statutes as regards the exclusion and admission of new members. He noted that any amendment of the Statutes could lead to a very time consuming procedure during the General Assembly. He reminded the EC that the idea was to create a committee that would manage any problems that may arise in this regard. As for the exclusion of members for non-political reasons, i.e. if the member is not paying the membership fees for instance, Michel Tubiana said that the EC would settle this issue beforehand in order to avoid it be discussed at the General Assembly.

As regards the agenda, Michel Tubiana suggested having an in-depth political analysis during the General Assembly leading to a General Assembly resolution. This analytical approach was also at the agenda of the last General Assembly; however it was not really materialized. He furthermore suggested discussing the elections, the role and internal functioning of the EC at the next EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014. The General Assembly budget is approx. 200,000 EUR and this amount has to be found outside the EMHRN budget. Therefore, there are some budgetary restrictions when considering the venue for the General Assembly, he noted. Nassera Dutour asked whether there is a rotation between the countries in the North and the South,

or whether the venue would depend on the funding. Michel Tubiana answered by saying that the venue would depend on the funding to a wide extent.

A possible theme for the General Assembly suggested by Søs Nissen was “new ways in human rights activism”. Young organisations that work with human rights in different ways could be invited for the General Assembly in order to meet with the new human rights generation, get inspiring ideas and have lively input to the discussions. Marc Schade-Poulsen thought it was an attractive idea to bridge between generations working on human rights at the General Assembly. Finally, Moataz El Feghery suggested another theme to be considered for the General Assembly, i.e. justice and accountability, being a common issue for the region.

Decisions:

- The different suggestions to venues should be explored for the next EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014 in order to have a more focused discussion on the issue at this meeting
- The elections, role and internal functioning of the EC to be discussed at the EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014

Document:

9.1 General Assembly time schedule

10. Possible suggestions to amendments of the Statutes regarding exclusions. Withdrawal of the member organisations the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and Iraqi Human Rights Association, as well as Per Stadig and Negad El-Borai (honorary members)

Moderator: Isaías Barreñada

Decisions:

- The EC took note of the following members' withdrawal of EMHRN membership, i.e. the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and Iraqi Human Rights Association, as well as Per Stadig and Negad El-Borai (honorary members)

Documents:

10.1 Membership overview (*for information*)

1.2 Membership application overview (*for information*)

11. The Migration program

Moderator: Moataz El Feghery

Shadia El Dardiry presented the Migration program to the EC members. In line with the EMHRN Strategy and the Work programme, the priorities for the program are the protection mechanisms; the monitoring of the asylum policies (including the infiltration law); as well as detention issues and EcoSoc rights of migrants and refugees that are of common interest to the South and the North. She mentioned that the EMHRN has not worked much on detention issues, however at the coming Working group meeting on 4-6 April 2014, a workshop would be organized on the detention trends in the region.

In relation to the EU relations and externalization, the EMHRN has been at the forefront of analysing the mobility partnership with Tunisia and Morocco, and other organisations joined the EMHRN statements on the issue. As regards border control, the EMHRN is participating in the Frontexit campaign and works closely with actors in North Africa. The EMHRN is also looking into the needs of the Syrian refugees and the added value that the EMHRN can bring, being a human rights network that is not on the ground. Shadia El Dardiry noted that one of the challenges is that the Migration program is very broad as it covers all countries as well as EU relations, migrants and refugees, and the resources allocated are not always accurate.

Now that the EU has signed partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia, Shadia El Dardiry asked the EC what the EMHRN's advocacy strategy would be, and what the Network would advocate for as a minimum. She suggested that the Working group could discuss it and present it to the EC.

As regards the Frontexit campaign, Shadia El Dardiry mentioned that it had been initiated one year ago by MigrEurope that is against the EU policies and in favour of freedom of circulation. The campaign brings together organisations from Europe and Africa and has four main elements, i.e. awareness raising, investigation, advocacy towards the EU institutions, and legislation. One of the EMHRN's roles in relation to the campaign has been to collect information and the Network has thus participated in a border mission in Turkey and Greece. The position of the campaign is to dismantle Frontex as it does not respect the human rights standards, however this would require a long battle. She asked the EC whether the EMHRN agrees with this position. She noted that it could also be considered to involve the Network more in the campaign, possibly including the advocacy team as well in the work. Marc Schade-Poulsen added that the EMHRN had applied for membership of the Consultative Forum Frontex but had not been appointed.

Following Shadia El Dardiry's presentation, Alya Cherif Chammari asked if there had been any activities in relation to migrant women, knowing that they are victims of violence. She also asked what the obstacles are in relation to the mobility partnership signed by Morocco and Tunisia. Shadia El Dardiry answered by saying that a report on women migrants had been issued by the EMHRN in 2007, and that in EMHRN reports there is always a component on women. She furthermore informed that Jordan had approached the EU in order to sign the mobility partnership. These partnerships offer some facilities, for instance for students to go to European universities. In exchange the countries signing should cooperate on border control issues. The EU has also signed a readmission agreement with Turkey, and she thought that it would be interesting to see how it will evolve.

Michel Tubiana noted the migration issue links the North and the South of the Mediterranean. The challenge has changed as nowadays, 50% of the migrants are not from the South to the North, but from the South to the South according to Michel Tubiana. He added that Frontex closes the borders, whereas the EMHRN is in favour of freedom of mobility; however Michel Tubiana was reluctant in relation to the issue of living in another country without any limitations or migratory policies. In relation to the refugees, Michel Tubiana said that the EMHRN is only working on their rights to be recognized as refugees and the EMHRN's role is not humanitarian. Talking about the mobility agreements, they do not contain accurate objectives, Michel Tubiana said.

In relation to the Frontexit campaign, Michel Tubiana was of the opinion that the EMHRN should remain in the campaign in order to shed the light on the fact that the EU is in contradiction with human rights principles. Frontex is a symbol of the fortress adopted by the EU, he said; however Michel Tubiana thought that it was more important to discuss the migratory principles of the EU than the cancellation of Frontex. In relation to the Migration program, he suggested to have more targeted campaigns on common themes that would mobilise the EMHRN members, for instance on the issue of visas. He furthermore suggested limiting the topics of the Migration program as it would not be manageable to deal with everything in the best manner.

In relation to the Migration program's priorities, Anitta Kynsilehto said that some of the member organisations work on migration, others on refugees, and some on both. If the Working group only advocates refugee rights, it would undermine member concerns as well, she said. As regards the mobility agreements, she asked how the EMHRN can formulate a position that everybody has the right to go back and forth – and the right to stay. Michel Tubiana said that the EC should have a debate on the issue, i.e. short terms visas vs. the right to stay, and to work and benefit or not from the social benefits.

Anitta Kynsilehto mentioned that she had participated in a fact finding mission as part of the Frontexit campaign, however it would be difficult to use some of the data on Frontex' doings without putting a risk on those whose rights had been violated and who had contributed to the report from the mission. She thought that the dismantling of Frontex would be a logical conclusion, the agency saying one thing and doing another thing.

Marc Schade-Poulsen suggested contacting the Fundamental Rights Agency that is led by Morten Kjærum. He asked what the Frontexit campaign would put in place instead of Frontex in order to manage the borders and receive refugees. Anitta Kynsilehto did however not think that it was the responsibility of the campaign to suggest an alternative to the current border control. Michel Tubiana and Osman İççi both agreed with Anitta Kynsilehto. Michel Tubiana also noted that the EMHRN could suggest that it should at least be the responsibility of the EU to save refugees. Shadia El Dardiry added that if Frontex was dismantled, the border control would instead be ensured by the individual countries.

Instead of advocating for Frontex to be dismantled, Søs Nissen suggested working on more narrow areas where the EU could possibly make some changes. She also suggested narrowing the focus of the Working

group on Migration and Refugees, the argument being that there are refugee councils that are stronger on these issues than the Network.

Marc Schade-Poulsen said that if the EC decided that the EMHRN should continue its participation in the Frontexit campaign, it would imply that the EMHRN is in favour of dismantling the Frontex. As regards the short term visas vs. the right to stay, Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that there are obligations for citizens that have the right to stay hence mutual requirements of the state and citizens. Michel Tubiana did not think that the EC should take a position for or against Frontex but focus on the policies behind Frontex and see how the Frontexit campaign unfolds.

Ramy Salhi suggested the EMHRN to work on improving the conditions for the mobility partnership agreements, and advocating for integrating human rights in Frontex. However, Eugenia Papamakariou said that even if a human rights dimension was included in Frontex, the EMHRN would not be able to monitor it. Also Søs Nissen said that if Frontex is wrong in its doings, the EMHRN should not try to improve it but rather state that it is wrong.

Isaías Barreñada said that the EMHRN should try to be realistic and have substantial critique on the practices of Frontex and not on the idea of Frontex. Ayachi Hammami agreed with Isaías Barreñada; he thought that civil society should suggest other practices in a plan of action in accordance with international human rights standards.

Moataz El Fegierly said that the EMHRN's position would also have implications for its partners in the campaign against Frontex. He was of the opinion that the EMHRN's position should be to dismantle Frontex and that the EMHRN should present arguments to support this position. Although it might not be realistic to dismantle Frontex, it would still put pressure on the EU to make some changes. Osman İşçi thought that since the EMHRN is taking part in the Frontexit campaign, the Network should respect the rules and terms of references for the campaign and clearly present its position. He was in favour of asking for the dismantling Frontex.

Isaías Barreñada agreed that the EMHRN could not isolate itself; however, supporting the campaign might also close some doors. He suggested insisting on being in the Consultative Forum, the added value of the EMHRN being that the Network has members in both the North and South of the Mediterranean. Ramy Salhi agreed with Ayachi Hammami and Isaías Barreñada, saying that he thought that the EMHRN should try to have impact from the inside. Also Nassera Dutour agreed with Ayachi Hammami and Isaías Barreñada; she thought that asking for the dismantling of Frontex was unrealistic and would take many years.

Finally, Shadia El Dardiry suggested sending a document to the EC that presents the arguments for dismantling Frontex. Anitta Kynsilehto noted that the EC would have to take some decisions by email before the publication on 23 May 2014 of the report on human rights violations at the Greek-Turkish border.

Decisions:

- The EC did not reach an agreement as to whether Frontex should be dismantled and the EC would thus look into the arguments in favour/against dismantling Frontex
- The EC will discuss the issue of migration and freedom of mobility in-depth at the EC meeting on 6-8 June 2014

Documents:

11.1 The EMHRN Migration project (*for information*)

11.2 EMHRN Participation in the Frontexit campaign (*for discussion*)

12. Miscellaneous

Moderator: Osman İşçi

- a. IHD mission to the border with Syria

Osman İşçi informed that the IHD is organising a mission to the border with Syria. Michel Tubiana informed that he would unfortunately not be able to take part in the mission.

- b. 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide next year

Osman İşçi informed that the IHD would have its own campaign on the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide as the organization has close relations with Armenians living in Turkey. He asked the EC for

suggestions to speakers and experts, and Michel Tubiana said that he would be able to send some suggestions to Osman İşçi.

c. Next Executive Committee meeting

The next Executive Committee meeting will take place on 6-8 June 2014 in Morocco. It was decided to organize the meeting in Rabat.