



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

GUIDELINES FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EMHRN WORKING GROUPS (WG)

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A. Introduction

The WG are created as a part of the EMHRN strategy of addressing specific human rights issues in the Euro-Mediterranean Region. The WG design specific policies and projects, advise the Executive Committee, and ensure the effective delivery of the mandate and agenda of the Network.

WG contribute to active networking including inter-active exchanges and learning, as well as capacity building both of individual members and member organisations of the WG, as well as of the WG itself.

In addition to the work and activities which they carry out within the framework of their specific projects, WG are intended to become fora of dialogue and exchanges between organisations and individuals originating from various countries from the North and the South of the Mediterranean region and with various cultural and professional backgrounds and experiences.

In order to ensure efficiency and clarity in modus operandi of the EMHRN WG - and at the same time ensure a minimum level of commonalities between them - clear rules must be adopted in order to organise the way WG are composed and function.

B. Nature and Composition of the WG

1. The EMHRN WGs are established upon a decision of the Executive Committee.
2. The WG are established for a specific purpose and may be ad hoc or permanent WGs.¹

1. In February 2009, there were 6 active permanent WGs: Freedom of Association; Human Rights Education; Justice; Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees; Palestine, Israel and the Palestinians; Women's Rights and Gender and no ad hoc WGs.

3. Each WG is made of following components:
 - Members of the WG.
 - A Facilitator elected by the members of the WG amongst themselves if they so decide. Depending on the needs and specificities of each WG the WG may also decide to work without a facilitator.
 - A Political Referent appointed by the Executive Committee amongst its members.
 - A Coordinator, member of the secretariat.
4. The members of the WG may be regular and associate members of the EMHRN. In addition, the WG may invite resource persons (individuals or representatives of organisations) to their meetings, either on a regular or an ad hoc basis.
5. As an indication, the number of members in a WG should not, in principle, be below 10 and above 15.
6. Any EMHRN member organisation can only be represented by one person in a particular WG.
7. There is no formal limitation to how many WG any particular EMHRN member organisation may be represented in, but priority will be given in the selection process to organisations that are not yet member of any WG.
8. Any individual can be member of only one WG.
9. Members of the WG are selected for a period between two general assemblies. WGs are renewed at every General Assembly, following a call for participation to which all EMHRN members can apply.

C. Membership criteria

The selection of WG members is made based on quantitative and qualitative criteria.

Involvement of member organisations in the WG

10. Potential member organisations should be either directly involved in the thematic of the WG or interested in increasing their capacity in this particular field. In any case, a strong interest for the topic dealt with by the WG should be demonstrated.

Involvement of the representatives of the member organisations

11. The representative chosen by the member organisation to represent it in the WGs should have a proven knowledge, be it practical or theoretical, of the topic of the WG. Alternatively, if the representative does not yet have specific knowledge of the topic, but is in charge, within the organisation s/he represents, of the issues discussed in the WG, admission can be made with the purpose of increasing his/her capacity in this field.

12. Although they represent member organizations, members of the WG are considered to be individual members of the WG and must commit themselves to engage actively in the discussions and the work of the WG. Similarly, they must commit themselves to attend, as far as possible, all WG meetings.
13. In addition, members of the WG should also commit themselves, on one hand, to inform their organisation about the work undertaken by the WG and, on the other hand, to inform regularly the other members of the WG about the activities undertaken by their organisation, and more generally the situation in their own country, regarding the topic covered by the WG. As far as possible, WG members originating from the same country should strengthen their cooperation on the thematic dealt with by the WG.

Geographical balance and country representation

14. Given the nature of the EMHRN, the composition of the WG should aim at reflecting a geographical balance between North and South as well as between Mashrek and Maghreb. All efforts shall be made to achieve such a balance.
15. In principle, no more than two organisations from the same country can be members of a WG. In addition, efforts shall be made to have as many countries as possible represented in each WG.

Gender balance

16. Efforts shall be made to ensure equal participation of men and women in the WGs.

Involvement of young people

17. Efforts shall be made to increase the participation of young people in the WGs.

Language

18. All WG members must be able to work at least in one, and preferably in two, of the three EMHRN working languages of the EMHRN, i.e. English, French and Arabic.

Adjustment of the criteria to each WG

19. The above-mentioned criteria are considered to be minimum criteria. Any additional criteria adopted for a specific WG must be published together with the Call for participation.

D. WG selection procedures

Selection of WG members by means of a Call for participation

20. WG members are, in principle, selected following a Call for participation drafted by the Secretariat and diffused amongst the EMHRN membership. The Secretariat ensures, before and after its publication, that sufficient publicity is made about the Call for participation.
21. Calls for participation must include at least following information:
- WG concept Paper and Guidelines for the Functioning of EMHRN WGs;
 - Description of the WG purpose and aims (with, if any, the Mandate or Terms of Reference of the WG);
 - Description of any particular project and activities being undertaken by the WG;
 - General and additional selection criteria;
 - Modalities and deadline for applying.
22. Calls for participation have to be approved by the Executive Committee before publication.
23. EMHRN member organisations wishing to apply for membership in a WG must send:
- A letter of motivation from the organisation, based on a standard form prepared by the EMHRN Secretariat;
 - A detailed CV of the individual chosen by the organisation to be its representative in the WG, also based on a standard form forwarded by the Secretariat.
 - A commitment letter signed by the representative chosen by the organisation.
24. The above-mentioned letter of motivation should include, at least, following information:
- Detailed explanation of the reasons why the organisation wishes to join the WG;
 - The contribution which the organisation may provide to the work of the WG;
 - The benefits it expects from its participation to the WG in relation to its national activities and, if any, to its regional networking capacities;
 - Description of the main activities and projects linked to the thematic of the WG which the organisation has undertaken or is or is planning to undertake;
25. The CV of the proposed representative of the organisation within the WG should contain, at least, following information:
- Age, sex and personal coordinates;
 - Work languages (English and/or French and/or Arabic);
 - Educational background and professional experience;
 - Personal achievement/experience in the thematic covered by the WG;
 - Current position of the representative within his/her organisation;
 - Description of the responsibilities which the representative assumes in his/her own organisation in relation to the thematic of the WG.

26. In addition, the representative chosen by the organisation is requested to sign a commitment letter by which s/he agrees:
- To regularly report within his/her organisation about the activities and the achievements of the WG;
 - To provide to the WG information on the activities and achievements of her/his organisation and the situation in her/country concerning the WGs' field of work.
27. The selection committee, composed of WG Coordinators, the Programme Director, the President and Vice-President of the EMHRN, processes the applications based on the agreed selection criteria. The proposed lists of selected members are then forwarded for decision to the Executive Committee. Decisions are communicated to the applicants as soon as possible. Claims against decisions made by the Executive Committee are referred further to the President for a final decision.

Selection of members in-between Calls for participation

28. Selection of members in-between Calls for participation, be it for reasons of death, resignation or required substitution, is dealt with internally by the WG Coordinator and Political Referent. In any case, applicants must submit a CV and a letter of commitment as required above.
29. Similarly, the WG may also decide that there are good reasons to include an additional member, although that particular member did not (or could not) apply under the Call for participation. Such good reasons may include the need to ensure representation from a particular country or the special added value which this new member could bring to the WG work. The decision to include a new member in-between Calls for participation is made internally by the WG Coordinator and Political Referent provided the documents required under Article 23 are submitted and shared with the other members of the WG.

E. Internal functioning of the Working Groups

Main documents

30. The Guidelines for the Functioning of the EMHRN Working Groups apply to all WGs and are to be distributed to all WG members upon their selection.
31. Each WG is requested to adopt an internal document, called Mandate or Terms of Reference, describing its mandate and the main aims of its activities. If this document already exists, it is to be updated, if need be, after renewal of the WG. If it does not exist yet, it is to be drafted, discussed and agreed upon amongst the members of the WG. Once agreed upon internally, it is submitted to the EMHRN Executive Committee for approval. Any subsequent update of the document is subject to the same procedure.

Responsibilities of the WG components:

Although the exact balance of responsibilities may vary according to the specificities of each Working Groups, the role and responsibilities of the WG components are, as an indication, as follows:

32.The WG members:

- Engage in the discussions, actions and project activities undertaken by the WG;
- Attend all meetings and events organised by the WGs;
- Provide regular information to the WG about the situation in their country regarding the WG thematic as well as their organisation's activities and policies in this field;
- Report regularly to their own organisation about the activities and results achieved by the WG;
- Act as referents within their own organisations regarding the WG thematic;
- Communicates regularly with the WG Coordinator and the other members of the WG;
- Communicate and coordinate with the members of the WG originating from the same country;
- Propose items on the agenda and facilitate chairing of meetings

33.The WG Facilitator:

- Is elected by the WG members amongst themselves if they so wish;
- In close cooperation with the WG Coordinator and the political referent, identifies and puts forward on the WG's agenda the member's common needs and suggestions;
- Provides input to the agenda of the WG meetings;
- Takes part in the moderation of the WG meetings;
- Encourages communication between members in-between meetings;

34.The WG Political Referent:

- Ensures that the decisions of the Executive Committee and those of the WG are communicated to both parties;
- Attends the meetings of the WG;
- Gives political input regarding the WG's field of activity;
- Ensures that the WG's action remains within its mandate and is in line with the EMHRN strategy, values and objectives.

35.The WG Coordinator:

- Organizes meetings and facilitates the delivery of the agenda of the WG;
- Acts as a resource person for the WG, providing analytic and strategic inputs;
- Takes part in fund raising efforts aimed at supporting the WG's specific activities;
- Keeps the contact with the member organisations alive and facilitates regular communication with WG members;
- Contacts and liaises with external partners ;

- Ensures good communication between the WGs.

36. Conflicts between WG actors should preferably be resolved through discussion and negotiation. If no agreement can be found within the WG, the matter has to be referred to a committee composed of the President, the Vice-President and the Executive Director of the EMHRN. All concerned parties must be given the opportunity to express their point of view before the committee makes a decision.

Review mechanisms

37. On a yearly basis, the WG members evaluate achievements and the work process. On this occasion the WG's Coordinator, Political Referent and possible Facilitator jointly also discuss the level of involvement of the members in the work of the WG. This evaluation is made on the basis of a series of benchmark designed specifically for each WG, but which may include elements such as the attendance to the meetings, the number of initiatives, the extent and regularity of the information provided by the members and the level of interaction with other members.

38. Based on the result of this evaluation, the WG Political Referent, the Facilitator, and/or the Programme Director will discuss with the members in order to increase and strengthen their involvement in the WG and to identify any obstacles that may prevent them from engaging more actively.

39. Executive Committee's decisions to freeze or cancel membership of an organisation in the Network automatically apply to all WG as well.

40. Decisions made by the committee provided for under Article 36 may include the freeze or the cancellation of the membership of an organisation and/or of its representative in a particular WG.