



EuroMed Rights – Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network
EuroMed Droits – Réseau euro-méditerranéen des droits humains
الأورو-متوسطية للحقوق- الشبكة الأوروبية المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

EuroMed Rights Executive Committee meeting

Copenhagen, 9-11 October 2015

Minutes – approved

EuroMed Rights' first Executive Committee meeting following the General Assembly on 12-14 June 2015 took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 9-11 October 2015. In the margin of the EC meeting, i.e. on 8 October 2015, a meeting was held between Wadih Al-Asmar, Moataz El Fegier, Osman İşçi and eight members of the Danish Foreign Affairs Committee. At this meeting, the three EC members talked about the political and human rights situation in their respective countries, including the situation for the Syrian refugees. They also presented their point of view as to what Denmark and the EU could and should do in the current situation. Later the same day, a public meeting was held at ActionAid under the topic "The situation and efforts in the proximity areas to the Syrian conflict – perspectives from the South".

On 10 October 2015, the Executive Committee members invited representatives of the Danish civil society for a discussion on the situation of human rights in Denmark. Gerd Elmark, Lianne Engelkes (both Dignity), Niklas Kabel Pedersen (the Danish Institute for Human Rights) and Pernille Mortensen (Danish MFA) participated in the debate.

Finally, during the Executive Committee meeting, the Executive Committee members expressed their support to Executive Committee member Osman İşçi from Turkey who lost several friends in the bomb attack that took place during the peaceful demonstration on Labour, Peace and Democracy organised by the trade unions in Ankara on 10 October 2015, resulting in more than 100 persons being killed and more than 400 persons injured. The EC drafted a statement on the bomb attack that was released the same day: http://euomedrights.org/publication/urgent-release_fourth-and-deadliest-attack-against-protesters-in-turkey-accountability-now/

PARTICIPANTS

Executive Committee (EC) of the EMHRN:

Michel Tubiana (President), Nabia Haddouche (Vice president), Moataz El Fegier (Treasurer), Anitta Kynsilehto, Osman İşçi, Søs Nissen (on 9-10 October), Raffaella Bolini, Wadih Al-Asmar, Messaoud Romdhani (on 10-11 October), Catherine Teule, Hamdi Shaqura, Isaías Barreñada (EC members).

Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director), Hayet Zeghiche (Communication Director), Vincent Forest (Advocacy Director, on 9-10 October), Marit Flø Jørgensen (Programme Director, on 9-10 October), and Maibritt Nielsen (Executive Secretary, rapporteur).

During the presentation of the Secretariat on 9 October (Session 2), the following staff members participated (a part from those mentioned above): Migena Gjerazi (Senior Administrative and Financial Officer) and Sarah Gjerding (Gender Programme Officer).

Absent with notification:

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AGENDA

1. Welcome, Approval of the Agenda and Approval of the Minutes from the last EC meeting on 13-15 March 2015
2. Presentation of the Secretariat and organisational chart, Working Groups, Solidarity Groups and Gender policy
3. Presentation of legal responsibilities
4. General Assembly: lessons learned, approval of General Assembly Report
5. Discussion on the situation in the region
6. Report from the Secretariat
7. Constitution of the Executive Committee
8. Advocacy Strategy: first draft
9. Communication
10. Internal communication:
11. Membership issues
12. Miscellaneous



1. Welcome, Approval of the Agenda and Approval of the Minutes from the last EC meeting on 13-15 March 2015

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Michel Tubiana welcomed the Executive Committee (EC) members to their first EC meeting following the General Assembly on 12-14 June 2015, and the EC members approved the Agenda for their meeting.

Round of presentation of EC members, including expectations for the next 3 years

Moderator: Søs Nissen

The Executive Committee members were then invited to present themselves and inform about their expectations for the coming three years.

Decision:

- The minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on 13-15 March 2015 were approved without any observations by those among the current Executive Committee members who had also taken part in the former Executive Committee.

Documents:

- 1.1 Agenda for the EC meeting on 9-11 October 2015 (*for approval*)
- 1.2 Minutes from the last EC meeting on 13-15 March 2015 (*for approval*)
- 1.3 Statutes (*for information*)

2. Presentation of the Secretariat and organisational chart, Working Groups, Solidarity Groups and Gender policy

Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented EuroMed Rights' organisational chart (*See 2.1 Organisational chart*) as well as the Network's different programmes, and the Executive Committee members were then introduced to the staff members present at the meeting.

Document:

2.1 Organisational chart (*for information*)

3. Presentation of legal responsibilities

Moderator: Catherine Teule

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the document *3.1 Director's liabilities*. He explained that since the Executive Committee members are doing voluntary work for a NGO, the legal system would be very lean with them as long as they do the work they are supposed to and make sure to stay informed about the financial matters, paying special attention to not approving a budget with a deficit, nor staying passive in case of financial problems. He informed that all EC members sign the audit reports and not only the Treasurer and President. The EC members should also make sure that the Network is following the Statutes and the Bylaws. If the EC members would sign on behalf of the Network as an individual, they could however still be held liable in a Danish court case. As things are now, Michel Tubiana thought that the Executive Committee members' legal responsibility is even too reduced, whereas Catherine Teule noted that the EC members also have the moral responsibility when serving their mandate in the EC.

Document:

3.1 Director's liabilities (*for information*)

4. General Assembly: lessons learned, approval of General Assembly Report

Moderator: Osman İşçi

Marc Schade-Poulsen asked the Executive Committee members for their feedback on the General Assembly (GA) that took place on 12-14 June 2015. He informed that the *4.1 General Assembly Report* would be signed by him and the President before being sent to the members and donors. He added that the *4.2 Satisfaction Survey* shows that the participants appreciated the General Assembly.

Michel Tubiana noted that the participants had approved the Work Programme 2015-2017. He regretted that all the amendments to the Statutes had been rejected by the GA, the reason being that the members did not feel that the amendments would respect the powers of the GA. He thought that the Executive Committee would consequently face some problems that they would not had faced, had the amendments been approved by the GA.

Wadih Al-Asmar noted that the possibility of suspending the membership of an organisation remains in the hands of the EC, whereas the GA will decide on the termination of the membership. This practice would be continued for the suspension of organisations but also for the acceptance of new organisations that would be validated by the GA. He did not understand why this power should be exclusively in the hands of the EC as suggested in the amendment to the Statutes, and he did not find it democratic to give this power to the EC.

Søs Nissen thought that the former EC had failed to explain the necessity of the suggested amendments in the Statutes to the members. She explained that it was important that the Network could develop and be renewed and enlarged with new member organisations, activists etc.; however in some cases, the Network had reached the ceiling of four members per country, and among these were passive members who take up a seat which limits the Network's work. The suggested amendments were not a question of giving more power to the EC but rather to adapt to the situation and have flexibility in terms of membership. She

regretted that the EC had not discussed these amendments with the members before the GA in order to get their support for them.

In line with what Søs Nissen said, Moataz El Fegiry thought that the EC should discuss the amendments with the key members of the Network and explain the logic behind the amendments. He himself had changed his point of view on the amendments during the General Assembly. Nabia Haddouche explained that some members had felt threatened as they thought that their own membership could be terminated if this power was solemnly in the hands of the EC. The member organisations did not have the possibility, as the EC, to know whether they might be considered as passive members of the Network.

Catherine Teule said that she knew that Michel Tubiana would not suggest something undemocratic but she also agreed that the amendments should have been better prepared, explaining the logic behind them to the members beforehand. Michel Tubiana thought that the discourse during the General Assembly had been worrying, as if some participants had tried to create a conflict between the members and the EC. The whole point of the amendments was however to avoid conflicts between member organisations that the GA would have to settle which would sabotage the GA as such.

Wadih Al-Asmar noted that he was in favour of the idea of having a Conflict Committee; however the amendments to the Statutes had been presented as one package instead of separate amendments. The Conflict Committee had thus not been presented as one single amendment which explains why this idea had been rejected. Hamdi Shaqqura agreed with Wadih Al-Asmar, saying that more preparation and dialogue with the members would be needed when suggesting amendments in the future. Rafaella Bolini thought that this incident could help the Network to understand how it can improve its dialogue with active/passive members. She also felt that during the GA, the member organisations should be allocated more time for the presentation of different issues.

Marc Schade-Poulsen reminded the EC members that more than half of the members had been in favour of the amendments (but not enough to reach the needed 2/3). Michel Tubiana also reminded them that the amendments had been discussed by the EC, sent to all members prior to the GA; however no comments had been received on their behalf. The amendments had then been distributed to the members a second time before discussing them at the GA. The members had thus had the chance to raise their voice before the GA. Catherine Teule noted that in the surveys, it was said that there was not enough time for the explanations and she suggested leaving more space for debate and interventions.

Michel Tubiana said that despite of the discussion on the amendments, the GA had been successful with a very nice atmosphere and solidarity, the member organisations appreciating that they are part of the Network. Due to limited funding, the debates had been shortened. The experience with the amendments of the Statutes however shows that dialogue is very important and that there should be more dialogue, also during the GA.

Decision:

- The General Assembly Report was approved by the EC.

Documents:

4.1 General Assembly Report (*for approval*)

4.2 Satisfaction Survey (*for information*)

5. Discussion on the situation in the region

Moderator: Rafaella Bolini

During the discussion on the situation in the region, the EC members highlighted the following developments;

South

- The failure of the ongoing Peace Process that has not led to peace nor security
- The large scale of destruction in Gaza following the war in 2014, resulting in thousands of civilians being displaced while waiting for reconstruction

- The militarisation in the Middle East that continues with the conflict in Yemen
- The peace process and the new government in Libya that are promising yet still fragile
- The role of Egypt in relation to Gaza, closing the borders towards Gaza
- The wave of restrictive and very broad terrorist legislations, as seen in Tunisia, Egypt and the Golf region, that gives the power to the security forces
- The Russian intervention against the opposition in Syria
- The political paralysis in Lebanon for the past two years, the Parliament having renewed its own mandate, the government meeting every second month, and without any President elected for a year
- The impact of the conflict in Syria on Lebanon that has so far received one million refugees from Syria, a number that is expected to increase
- The garbage problems in Lebanon for the past three months, that have led to demonstrations with more than 100,000 persons on 29 August 2015, gathering people from all religious movements and political parties
- The reforms aiming at implementing the new Constitution, as well as the decent election campaign of the left wing parties and the election of many young candidates during the last elections in Morocco
- The borders between Algeria and Morocco that remain closed since 1994
- The increased restrictions on human rights defenders, including tax regulations, travel bans and long sentences to prison
- The Nobel Peace Prize that has been awarded to The National Dialogue Quartet that comprises the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, and the EuroMed Rights member the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH).

North

- The upcoming parliamentary elections in Spain, and the Conservative government in power since 2011 that has put more restrictions on rights and freedoms, increasing the political confrontation in Spain
- The lack of a unified vision and solidarity at the EU level, illustrated by the European response to the Greek crisis and the refugees and migrants arriving to Europe, a response that does not honour the noble objectives behind the EU project
- The dangerous distinction between migrants and refugees, looking upon the migrants as persons invading Europe
- The bilateral agreements on refugees between some EU countries and countries in the South, for instance the cooperation between the Spanish government and Mauretania that is preventing the refugees to arrive to Spain
- The elections in Finland in April 2015 bringing a conservative government in power that has introduced different measures against the weak persons in society (elderly, poor, sick persons) which has led to demonstrations to protest against these measures
- The dangerous set-up of a hierarchy according to the different countries the refugees come from, Syrian refugees being more accepted than other refugees in for instance Finland
- The bomb attack during the peaceful demonstration on Labour, Peace and Democracy organised by the trade unions in Ankara on 10 October, resulting in more than 100 persons killed and 400 injured
- The fight between the government and the PKK in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections in Turkey
- The increase of the xenophobic movements in Europe.

Michel Tubiana ended the discussion by saying that EuroMed Rights' work on documenting violations in Syria is important, however, at the same time, the Network is not able to help the people on the ground. In general, political conflicts are being replaced by military conflicts which render the EuroMed Rights' work as human rights activists very difficult.

6. Report from the Secretariat

- Work Programme and Finances
- Establishing Working Groups

Moderator: Nabia Haddouche

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the report from the Secretariat (see 6.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 7, April to July 2015) and invited the EC members to comment on the activities of the different Working groups that they had participated in (activities are only mentioned below when they are not included in the 6.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 7, April to July 2015). Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that before the GA, the cycle of the Working Groups had been closed, and that there had been a call for participation in the Working Groups after the GA.

Shrinking spaces (former FOAA)

Marc Schade-Poulsen reminded the EC that it was said in the Work Programme 2015-2017 adopted by the GA that a Working Group is perhaps not the most efficient way of working on FOAA. Isaías Barreñada said that it was not clear how the work on FOAA, being one of the most important issues, would continue within the Network. Wadih Al-Asmar said that there seems to be a new tendency within the Network that the existence of Working Groups depends on technical issues, i.e. whether there are funds available or not. It was his feeling that the Working Groups do not have the same importance as before. Osman İşçi informed that following the GA, he had been contacted by the FOAA Working Group members who had not been happy about the decision of the GA. He suggested asking the Working Group members to discuss alternative ways of working on FOAA for the coming three years.

Migration and Asylum

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the policy paper on how Europe should accept Syrian refugees had been relaunched. As regards the Frontexit campaign, the funds are running out, and the Network is looking into whether it can raise some funds to continue the positive networking. Catherine Teule added that the Working Group is trying to get some answers from the French government on the measures taken to influence the refugee crisis as well as to get a commitment from the government to let the embassies give the asylum visa to the Syrian refugees. In relation to Frontexit, Catherine Teule thought that the objectives of the campaign should be changed and not only be about putting an end to Frontex. She noted that in Lampedusa, the return charters for migrants are carried out by Frontex with the approval of the Ministry of Interior.

Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Working Group is working on accountability in relation to the last war in Gaza. Hamdi Shaqqura added that Adalah, Al-Haq and PCHR had taken part in a mission to Germany in September 2015; during this mission, they met with Parliamentarians, the MFA, NGOs etc., and these meetings had focused on the lack of accountability and how to advocate for accountability. Hamdi Shaqqura thought that the Network should establish stronger partnerships with the human rights community in the different countries so the human rights organisations can support the Network to reach the decision making level in these countries. It would also be important to look at how the Network can mobilise the media, he noted.

EU

Vincent Forest informed that the ENP would be published around 18 November 2015; however he had been told that it would not make any reference to human rights and civil society. The Network would thus try to influence the draft. He furthermore informed that there will be a conference on regional dialogue in spring 2016, the EU wanting to support a regional platform for civil society. Finally, Vincent Forest informed that a two day EU-Human Rights Defender annual meeting would take place in December 2015, the theme being the shrinking space for civil society globally. The point of departure for the discussions will be the right to protest, followed by the measures for civil society to develop contacts within the EU. 8-10 of EuroMed Rights' members would participate in this summit.

Rafaella Bolini suggested the Network to send updates to the EC members on the discussions that are taking place on the space of dialogue within the framework of the new ENP. She furthermore informed that ARCI will organise the second edition of the Sabir festival in Sicily that will focus on migrants and refugees, and the situation in the Mediterranean in general. She would send the first draft of the programme to the EC members by the end of October 2015 in order to discuss it with them.

Finally, Moataz El Fegiry said that there had been an increase of the country approach for the past five years; however the challenge is to maintain the regional approach, empower the members and provide

advocacy opportunities. Many donors are however not interested in the regional dimension as the political context differ from one country to another.

Marc Schade-Poulsen then presented the two budgets, i.e. the *6.4.a EMHRN Budget 2015-2017 and Accounts January to July 2015* and the *6.4.b Budget for 2015-17 related to the EMHRN Work Programme and Accounts January to July 2015*. In the latter, being the political budget that is presented to the GA, the percentage allocated to the different activities shows. He informed that the Network's donors have expressed their point of view that the expenses related to staff are too high compared to those related to activities; however Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the staff members should also be looked upon as an activity in themselves, participating in different meetings on for instance Advocacy.

As regards the *6.4.a EMHRN Budget 2015-2017 and Accounts January to July 2015*, Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that this budget shows the expected income in 2016 and 2017. On the basis of this budget, the Secretariat will make proposals for activities in the coming years. He noted that not all the funds are on board but that the Secretariat will continue to fundraise and explore other funding opportunities. He mentioned that it seems to be easier to get funds for country work rather than regional work.

Budget wise, Isaías Barreñada stressed the importance of keeping the balance between the North and the South, meaning that if the Network submits many funding applications on Tunisia, the focus will be more on the South than the North. He asked whether it would be possible to identify a ceiling in order to keep the geographical balance.

Wadih Al-Asmar thought that there was a problem with the fundraising strategy. Being a network, EuroMed Rights' work on countries should take place through its members and not by the Network directly. According to Wadih Al-Asmar, the Network is focusing more on the countries than the region. He thought that the donors want to push the Network to go in certain directions. The question was whether the Network should follow this or stick to its own priorities. Michel Tubiana did not agree with Wadih Al-Asmar that the Network is losing its independence when searching for funds; the Network will identify its political priorities while knowing the political constraints. However, the membership fees alone will not allow EuroMed Rights to function, he noted.

Marit Flø Jørgensen then informed the EC of the upcoming activities. She noted that the Network would continue the country programmes in relation to Egypt, Syria and Tunisia. However, it was a challenge to secure specific programme funding for the thematic regional work. She suggested to continue the activities where is a joint interest between the North and the South.

Following the presentation of the activities, Catherine Teule asked why there had been a call for participation for the Justice Working Group if no funds have been allocated for this Working Group, and she asked whether the Working Group still exists. As regards the Migration and Asylum Working Group, she suggested also focusing on the countries in the North and making them aware of the challenges in terms of migration.

Søs Nissen did not think that the missing funds for the Justice Working Group in the budget reflected the discussions that had taken place within the EC and during the GA to revitalise the work on justice. She therefore suggested employing a staff member to work on justice after half a year and changing the budget accordingly (the funds could be taken from the FOAA programme). With a bit of luck, the Network would receive the funds to continue the Justice Working Group, however Søs Nissen did not agree to postpone the start-up of the Justice Working Group for a whole year. Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that funds had been allocated to start up the Justice Working Group and have activities in the first half of 2016, however with restrained funds for human resources. Michel Tubiana added that he was currently editing a document on anti-terrorism and violation of freedoms, and he expressed his hope that the German MFA would allocate funds for this issue.

As regards freedom of association and assembly, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Network would work for enabling spaces for civil society and push the EU in that direction, and set up meetings between the EU and the members on this issue. Michel Tubiana was however not convinced that meetings with the Europeans would lead to anything. He did not think either that the Network should write yet another report on FOAA but instead carry on with the work, keeping one yearly meeting of the Working Group.

Wadih Al-Asmar expressed his concern that in the budget, 1/3 of the funds are allocated to the themes, while 2/3 are allocated to the countries. He also thought that FOAA is an important issue and he added that the FOAA report had had a political impact. The Working Group is the only link for the members to meet once or twice a year, he noted; if the funds for the themes are reduced, the opportunity for the members to meet would be reduced accordingly, and he therefore thought that the means to continue the Working Groups should be found. Different communication tools for the set-up of Working Groups meetings could also be envisaged. He furthermore noted that, taking into consideration the situation in the region, the Economic and Social rights are important.

Finally, Rafaella Bolini agreed with Wadih Al-Asmar to use other communication tools for the Working Groups, for instance conference calls, and in addition organise campaigns that gather members on a specific issue. This would help the Network to cover all issues without necessarily allocating funds for a Working Group.

Decision:

- The budget was approved by the EC, the only change being that 10,000EUR should be allocated to the Justice programme in order to employ a staff member for 6 months starting from July 2016.

Documents:

- 6.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 7, April to July 2015 (*for information*)
- 6.2 Work Plan 2015 (*for information*)
- 6.3 Work Programme 2015-2017 (*for information*)
- 6.4 Budgets and accounts (3 documents) (*for approval*)
- 6.5 Guidelines for the functioning of the Working Groups (*for information*)
- 6.6 Working Groups: call for participation (*for information*)

7. Constitution of the Executive Committee

- Agreement on functioning
- Choice of Political Referents
- The Executive Committee members' expectations towards one another

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Before inviting the EC members to express their wishes in relation to the distribution of responsibilities within the EC, Michel Tubiana noted that the Vice President and the Treasurer had already been designated. He mentioned that one of the difficulties that the former EC had been facing was to communicate all of them together due to the different languages and location of the EC members. However, it was important to have collective debates, he said. He furthermore noted that the democratic functioning of the EC does not imply that the EC members should always consult each other but that they should know when to consult each other, bearing in mind that the Network sometimes has to take fast decisions.

The different responsibilities of the EC were distributed as follows according to the EC members' wishes:

- Michel Tubiana, President (elected by the GA) and in charge of Discrimination
- Nabia Haddouche, Vice President and in charge of Gender and the Maghreb
- Moataz Fegiery, Treasurer and in charge of 'Shrinking spaces' and the Machrek incl. Turkey (particularly Egypt)
- Wadih Al Asmar: Rule of Law; Machrek incl. Turkey, and Communication
- Osman Isci: 'Shrinking spaces', and Machrek incl. Turkey (in particular Turkey and Syria)
- Hamdi Shaqqura: Palestine, Israel and Palestinians
- Messaoud Romdhani: Economic and Social Rights, and the Maghreb
- Isaías Barrenada: Economic and Social Rights, and the Maghreb
- Catherine Teule: Migration and Refugees, and Europe
- Anitta Kynsilehto: Migration and Refugees, and Discrimination
- Rafaella Bolini: Europe, and Membership issues
- Søs Nissen: Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

Bylaws

Michel Tubiana informed that the amendment of the Bylaws (point 7 and 8.1) was a result of the amendment of the Network's Statutes. The auditors had asked EuroMed Rights to inform in the Statutes that grants could be given to other organisations in exceptional circumstances. So far, it had only happened once. The amendment in the Statutes should however also be reflected in the Bylaws. Marc Schade-Poulsen added that, in their call for proposals, the EU asks the organisations to make sub-grants to other organisations, and it could be envisaged that EuroMed Rights would have to make sub-grants in order to obtain the EU grants.

Decisions:

- The EC was constituted and the responsibilities of the EC members were distributed (*see list above*)
- The suggested amendments of the Bylaws (article 7 and 8.1) were approved by the EC
- The next EC meeting on 5-7 February 2016 will take place in Morocco (the venue to be decided upon). The EC meeting will be linked to the Staff Development Days.

Document:

7.1 By laws (*for approval*)

8. Advocacy Strategy: first draft

Moderator: Isaías Barreñada

Vincent Forest presented the *8.1 Advocacy Strategy: first draft* to the EC members. Following the presentation, the EC members discussed the document.

Hamdi Shaqqura noted that a lot of time had been invested in the EU institutions, however mostly at the technical level and not at the decision making level. He thought that it was important to have meetings at the EU level but also in the capitals. Advocacy is not only about the organisation of a mission but durable sustained work in cooperation with partners in the respective countries, he said. He furthermore noted that the EcoSoc Status would make it easier for the Network to approach the UN bodies, alone or together with other organisations. Vincent Forest said that it was very difficult to meet the Commissioners in Brussels; however the Network has succeeded in obtaining good contacts with the ambassadors of the member states, i.e. at the Cabinet level. He added that the idea was to balance between the member states and the EU. The Network needs to know who is influential in the member states and develop some contacts there to know the state of affairs in the respective countries.

Michel Tubiana said that the EcoSoc status illustrates the bad functioning of the UN as many NGOs that are close to the governments get the EcoSoc status. If the Network would be granted the EcoSoc status, Michel Tubiana thought that a staff member should be employed in Geneva and a budget allocated for this, as the UN advocacy could not be ensured from the Brussels office. He noted that one of the added values of the Network is the EU advocacy. Today, there is a shift in the influential institutions, however the EU remains influential and the European Parliament remains relevant to the Network. Within the European Council, some countries are also influential, and EuroMed Rights has to prioritise and see in which capitals, the Network has partners as it is not feasible to do advocacy in all of the 27 capitals. Søs Nissen thought that there should be a special reason or advantage for the Network to approach the UN, and it should be clarified what the Network's added value would be at the UN level.

Rafaella Bolini thought that, in general, the advocacy efforts should include the members, however civil society mainly meet the technical staff and not the political decision makers. She suggested to focus on the European Parliament rather than the technical staff at the EU level, and to focus on the parliaments at the national level. In addition, the advocacy efforts should be directed to civil society as the Network would be more efficient if it cooperates with other organisations on the same questions instead of duplicating work. Vincent Forest noted that, in terms of foreign policy, the member states hold the power, and the influence of the European Parliament on foreign issues is limited.

Marc Schade-Poulsen thought that the Network should be more focused on where its actions are most effective which is not always necessarily at the EU level. He suggested building up alliances between civil society in key countries and the group of member states, taking into consideration that the member states build their own circles of alliances. Catherine Teule said that the local partners have a lot of actions in the capitals; however they do not have any ambitions at the EU level. She suggested lobbying the international organisations that have an impact on the decisions at the EU level, one example being the UNHCR that is the first to intervene when the EU Commission organises the forum on migrants.

Wadih Al-Asmar agreed with Michel Tubiana that advocacy efforts at the UN level should be undertaken from Geneva; however this would have some budgetary implications. He noted that the advocacy efforts should be decided according to the nature of the issue that the Network is advocating for, bearing in mind which member states or which institutions are the most influential for the Network. He noted that it is useful for the Network's members to have meetings at the EU level to understand how the EU functions, even if it implies meetings at the technical level only.

Nabia Haddouche thought that it would be important to have the EcoSoc Status that would allow the Network to follow the events of the UN General Assembly in Europe and make written declarations at the UN level. She noted that it was important for the local organisations to get the assistance of EuroMed Rights to be introduced to the EU Delegations as it is difficult for them to target these Delegations on their own.

Finally, Moataz El Feghery informed that a Working Group has been established by different organisations to monitor the League of Arab States and develop an advocacy strategy. He suggested that the Network should continue to cooperate with this Working Group as the League of the Arab States influences the situation in the region negatively. Messaoud Romdhani thought that it was good to make pressure on the League of the Arab States and see if it could be beneficial for the Network to work with them, whereas Michel Tubiana thought that the League would enable the Network to approach the Arab states and accompany its members in their approach with the Arab states. He noted that it is a political forum like any other political forum. However, Nabia Haddouche did however not think that it was useful to focus on the League of the Arab States, which Wadih-Al Asmar and Vincent Forest agreed with as its impact is limited.

Vincent Forest then presented the Tentative Advocacy Strategy Roadmap (page 10). He noted that he would prepare a more operational document in cooperation with the Working Groups, helping them to set their priorities and objectives in terms of advocacy.

Isaías Barreñada thought that the strategic objective to transform the Network into a reference organisation for human rights was a bit too ambitious as long as the Network does not tackle all issues pertaining to human rights in terms of both themes and geography. In the Roadmap presented, Isaías Barreñada thought that different actors were missing, i.e. the economic and social agents, media, employers' organisations, that have never integrated the human rights dimension in their political approach. He also thought that an evaluation of the advocacy strategy was missing, i.e. not only measuring the impact but also preparing future advocacy. The evaluation should however not be reserved to the Advocacy Department, the Advocacy Strategy being a political document. Michel Tubiana noted that it is the responsibility of the EC to define the political content of the Advocacy Strategy which Wadih Al-Asmar agreed with.

As an answer to Isaías Barreñada, Vincent Forest agreed that the number of actors could be enlarged to include the media etc.; however the financial means should be available in order to do so. As regards the evaluation, it should include the objective for each advocacy activity; however it is very difficult to measure the impact of the advocacy activities although there are some indicators that could be used.

Based on her experience, Nabia Haddouche also thought that it was difficult to evaluate the impact of an advocacy mission as the impact can show indirectly or in the long term. It is however possible to have a questionnaire with precise questions and, through the answers, measure the impact of the advocacy.

Wadih Al-Asmar thought that the public opinion in Europe and how to use it as an ally to the Network's campaigns and activities was lacking from the Advocacy Strategy. Finally, he suggested having executive summaries in the Network's publications as it cannot be expected that the publications will be read at length.

Document:

8.1 Advocacy Strategy: first draft (*for discussion*)

9. Communication

- How, when and what to communicate

Moderator: Messaoud Romdhani

Hayet Zeghiche informed the EC members that she had previously been asked to submit a communication plan that had led to the creation of a Communication Department, a new operational web site targeting civil society, policy makers, and the wide public opinion, as well as a database. The communication plan outlines many strategic orientations as well as the methodology for the communication. During the EC meeting, she would not thus ask for feedback on the methodology but rather the EC members' political feedback and orientation in order to improve the Network's communication. Hayet Zeghiche noted that the Advocacy Strategy (*See 8.1 Advocacy Strategy: first draft*) has also implications on the external and internal communication.

She then presented the document *9.1 Session on Communication* and asked the EC members for their feedback on the political content as regards:

- Is the vocation of the Network to react to news or to provide more an expert dimension to such developments? It is relevant for the Network to react to events and developments out of solidarity but should the Network break news?
- Which type of news requires the mobilisation of the Network? The solidarity dimension prevails in many cases. Why does the Network help this human rights defender and not the other?
- Who is the Network's audience? Are they experts, or the wide public?

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that there is currently a tendency to produce many statements – up to four/week – to respond to the many developments in the region; however this logic and automaticity should be broken. The Network should ask why a statement should be issued, where it can get its message through and who to target. He noted that the Network is trying to influence the decision makers, the media and the public opinion on behalf of its members and the members should thus remain at the core of the communication strategy. When the activities are planned, the Communication Department should also be on board. On the political level, he thought that there was a momentum for the Network in the coming years, i.e. the momentum between the EU and the South that links to the Network's added value on the regional work.

In relation to Hayet Zeghiche's questions, Wadih Al Asmar thought that the Network's audience is the decision makers, the academics but also the wide public. Sometimes, it would be through the wide public that the Network can influence the decision makers. He was therefore of the opinion that the Network should also target the public opinion as main target. Osman İşçi said that in the case of solidarity, the targeted audience would be clear, i.e. the public opinion. In the case of a position paper that should influence decision makers, the target group would be the decision makers. In the statements, he suggested having a paragraph to address civil society with average knowledge, and having a paragraph that targets the experts. He asked whether the statements were sent to all the media, or if they were sent to media interested in the issue of the statement only. Hayet Zeghiche answered that the statements are distributed according to the theme of interest, except in the case of regional developments

Isaías Barreñada agreed with Marc Schade-Poulsen that the members are at the core of the communication, however he noted that the added value of the Network is that it tackles the EuroMed dimension from the human rights perspective which no other regional or international organisations do. The states and the EU institutions benefit from the fact that no public attention is given to the instruments and the signed agreements. The information about the EuroMed partnership does not arrive to the wide public, and here the Network has a specific mandate.

Rafaella Bolini informed that she uses the statements from the Network as a source of information and training for the members of her network to understand the region. The majority of the media in Italy is not interested in the issues that the Network is working on. She thought that it was important to break news, but on time, and to produce campaigns.

Wadih Al-Asmar thought that, in order to impact the decision makers, the Network should use all the communication tools. He thought that the number of statements should be reduced and that the Network

should use Facebook and Twitter to a larger extent as the social media is one of the main communication channels today all over the world. He therefore suggested employing a staff member who could ensure the relations with the social media. Hayet Zeghiche noted that the format of the statements should be adapted to the social media. She furthermore suggested employing a staff member to ensure the face-to-face relation with the press in Brussels and elsewhere, i.e. a press attaché.

Hamdi Shaqqura noted that the media should receive background information on the event or development, and not only the statement itself. Nabia Haddouche said that people want to know the Network's position and not just receive information about the different events. She added that she would like to have proper time to analyse a statement if she is asked to co-sign it. She noted that, being a regional network, the Network should address all the relevant actors in the statements, and not only the Moroccan authorities as in the case of the Moroccan borders,

Catherine Teule said that those who visit the web site want to have digested information. She added that many documents accompany the decisions of the EU institutions and she thought that they should be available on the web site. Hayet Zeghiche however noted that the analysis notes from the EU are very long and technical, and the statistics show that only a few are reading them due to the format that is not adequate.

Hayet Zeghiche informed that the indicators from the web site, Facebook and Twitter are analysed every two months. According to them, there is traffic at the web site every time something is published, and this traffic comes mainly from desk stations (not IPADs and mobile phones) which is an indication that the web site is used for professional news. The main entry point to the web site is Facebook, returning visitors come more often than new visitors, and the job section is the most popular section on the web site. At the next EC meeting, there would be more information on the programmes and the media monitoring, i.e. where the statements are picked up by the press and there the Network fails to have impact.

Finally, Michel Tubiana said that communication is a top priority for the Network, and that the Network should strive at responding to its members' concerns in the communication. The Network will always be faced with new issues, and there is not one formula that can be applied for all issues. He noted that communication should be included in the thinking and the preparation of the publications from the beginning. He thought that it would be very useful to include the EU institutions' calendar of events on the web site in order to be better prepared for events and meetings. Isaías Barreñada also suggested adding the calendar of events between the EU and the partner countries to the web site as it is not available elsewhere.

Document

- 9.1 Session on Communication (*for discussion*)

10. Internal communication:

- Agreement on the internal functioning
- Training on internal communication

Moderator: Wadih Al-Asmar

Hayet Zeghiche presented the consultation procedures to the EC; the current practice is that for urgent statements, the President and the Executive Director are consulted with a 24 hours deadline, whereas all EC members are consulted for non-urgent statements with a 72 hours deadline. In the case of longer reports, the Political Referents and the EC members are consulted with a seven days deadline. She noted that the issue of translations delays the process and she asked whether the EC members should receive all documents in English and French systematically. A choice is to be made as to whether priority should be given to the timing, or the availability of translations, as some EC members are not able to react in both English and French.

In relation to the procedures for the statements, Michel Tubiana said that the question was to know who to consult and when, as not all EC members should be consulted for every issue. In some cases, like the bombing in Ankara on 10 October 2015 that could not rise any debate within the EC, there should be an immediate reaction that does not need an EC consultation. However, in the case of Morsi's arrival to power and the coup by the military in Egypt, the issue was political and a consultation with the EC and the Egyptian members was needed. In the case of joint statements, EuroMed Rights is often asked to co-sign these with a short deadline,

making it difficult to consult all the EC members to obtain the consensus in time. Michel Tubiana also mentioned that sometimes, the EC is asked to approve EuroMed reports within 24 hours which is not acceptable.

Hamdi Shaqqura thought that the deadline of 24 hours for an urgent statement is fair, and he asked to receive the statements in at least two languages (French/English or Arabic/English). Wadih Al-Asmar also agreed to the 24 hours deadline and he suggested considering the lack of approval or comments received before this deadline as a silent approval of the statement. In the case of statements in French, Osman İççi said that he would trust the French speaking EC members. However, if the statements are related to his responsibilities within the EC, in particular Turkey, he would like to receive the statements in English. This would mean that priority should be given to the content compared to the language. Wadih Al-Asmar agreed to this in principle, however controversial issues might need to be available in the two languages, he said. In the case of controversial issues, Rafaella Bolini thought that the EC should be flexible and not wait 24 hours to react. She also thought that the EC's mailing list should be used to a larger extent to work collectively.

Hayet Zeghiche then presented the Outlook.net as a suggestion for a new tool for the EC members' internal communication. It was noted that the new email address (initials@euromedrights.net) that the EC members will receive offers a lot of possibilities to be explored, i.e. distribution of documents for the EC meetings, membership applications, editing of statements, chat, sharing of calendar etc., and that it would reduce the email trafficking among the EC members. The EC members can forward the emails from the Outlook address to their conventional email addresses if they wish to do so, however if they want to modify the documents in Outlook.net, the EC members would have to sign in to the tool.

In order to start up the tool, Hayet Zeghiche will set up the group, including the EC members, the Executive Secretary, and herself as the administrator. The EC members will receive an invitation for Outlook.net. In Outlook, the files can be accessed under EC. If the documents are sent to the EC for validation, the EC members should first choose the language (French or English) under Options, click on the document in question, and then click on Edit document/Edit in Word (not Word online). Once amended by the EC, the amendments will show under Modified. Following the deadline, the Communication Department will consolidate the changes and send the new versions (English and French) to the EC members.

Decision:

- The EC agreed to try the communication tool provided by Outlook.net for their internal communication. During the next EC meeting on 5-7 February 2015, the new communication tool should be evaluated by the EC.

11. Membership issues

Decisions:

- The decision on the membership application from People in Need, Czech Republic, was postponed in order to visit the organisation, the purpose being to get to know the organisation better
- The decision on the membership application from ARRD-Legal Aid, Jordan, was postponed in order to consult EuroMed Rights' members in Jordan on the application
- Adala-Justice, Morocco, was adopted as a new Regular member

Documents:

- 11.1 Membership application from ARRD-Legal Aid, Jordan (*for approval*)
- 11.2 Membership application from Adala-Justice, Morocco (*for approval*)
- 11.3 Overview of Members (*for information*)
- 11.4 Overview of Membership applications (*for information*)

12. Miscellaneous

Moderator: Hamdi Shaqqura

No issues were brought forward under this point.