



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

Rabat, 5-7 February 2016

Minutes – Approved

EuroMed Rights' Executive Committee met on 5-7 February 2016 in Rabat, Morocco. In the margin of the EC meeting, i.e. on 4 and 5 February 2016, meetings were held with Abderrazzak Rouwane, Secretary General of the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights; Ambassador Rupert Joy from the EU Delegation; Driss El Yazami, President of the CNDH; and the Network's members (AMDH, OMDH, Adala, and ADFM) in Morocco. During these meetings the EC members discussed the human rights situation in the Maghreb with special focus on Morocco and also highlighted the lessons learnt in Tunisia in relation to human rights and networking with the EU, civil society and government representatives. On 5 February 2016, the Executive Committee invited members and partners for a working dinner to discuss the current human rights situation in Morocco. Some of the issues raised at this meeting were the shrinking space for human rights organisations in Morocco in particular in terms of freedom of assembly and speech, as well as the lack of a free press and trade union freedoms. On a more positive note was mentioned the very active civil society in Morocco.

PARTICIPANTS

Executive Committee (EC) of EuroMed Rights:

Michel Tubiana (President), Nabia Haddouche (Vice president), Anitta Kynsilehto, Osman İççi, Wadih Al-Asmar, Messaoud Romdhani, Catherine Teule, Isaías Barreñada (EC members).

Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director), Vincent Forest (Advocacy Director), Ramy Salhi (Director of the Maghreb office), and Maibritt Nielsen (Senior Executive Secretary, rapporteur).

Absent with notification:

Moataz El Fegjery (Treasurer), Søs Nissen, Raffaella Bolini, and Hamdi Shaqqura (EC members).

Other participants:

Adallah Saaf, Political scientist (on 6 February, session 10).

AGENDA

1. Welcome, Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the last EC meeting on 9-11 October 2015
2. Discussion on the situation in the region
3. Report from the Secretariat
4. Financial Report from the Secretariat, including update on Fundraising
5. Gender Mainstreaming in the Network
6. Advocacy Strategy Roadmap
7. Strategy for the Programme on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians
8. Results from the Solidarity Group on Egypt

9. Strategy on Tunisia
10. Discussion on EuroMed Rights' approach in relation to the countries in the Maghreb
11. Programme on Discrimination
12. Membership issues
13. Follow-up on the EC's internal communication
14. Miscellaneous



1. Welcome, Approval of the agenda and approval of the minutes from the last EC meeting on 9-11 October 2015

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

Michel Tubiana welcomed the Executive Committee (EC) members to the EC meeting, and the EC members approved the agenda for their meeting.

The EC members were then briefed about the meetings that had taken place in the margin of the EC meeting, i.e. on 4 and 5 February 2016;

During the meeting with the Interministerial Delegation for Human Rights, the Delegation had expressed its disagreement with the Network's report on the Western Sahara, in particular with the paragraph mentioning that an exception regime in being exposed on the Western Sahara.

During the meeting with the Network's members, these had expressed their concern about the current setbacks in relation to the human rights situation in Morocco, in particular as regards democratic freedoms, and the stalled process in relation to the adoption of the new organic laws, as well as the laws on violence against women. It was noted that the Moroccan government has a tendency to present draft laws and then withdraw these drafts before adoption.

The meeting with Driss El Yazami revealed that the CNDH in Morocco seems to have more financial resources than the CNDH in France; it has a lot of weight and is working on every aspect of human rights in Morocco, including the four conventions on torture, children's rights, people with disabilities, and discrimination.

Finally, when meeting the EU Delegation in Morocco, the Network submitted some proposals to the EU Delegation based upon the experiences from Tunisia in relation to networking with organisations. During this meeting, the halt of the diplomatic relations between the Moroccan government and the EU Delegation were also discussed.

Nabia Haddouche thought that the meetings gave the Network some opportunities for work in Morocco while Isaías Barreñada thought that it was shocking that the migration issue had not been mentioned during the different meetings, including the meeting with the Network's members in Morocco. Also Michel Tubiana felt that the issue of refugees had been avoided during the different meetings. Anitta Kynsilehto however noted that among the people representing the Network member organisations, those who had participated in the work of the migration and asylum working group - the most specialised in these issues within their own organisations - were not present.

Decision:

- The minutes from the Executive Committee meeting on 9-11 October 2015 were approved without any observations.

Documents:

- 1.1 Agenda for the EC meeting on 5-7 February 2016 (*for approval*)
- 1.2 Minutes from the last EC meeting on 9-11 October 2015 (*for approval*)

2. Discussion on the situation in the region

Moderator: Nabia Haddouche

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

South

- The alarming human rights situation in Morocco, human rights organisations being prohibited from holding meetings, but, on a more positive note, the ruling of the Administrative Court against some state acts
- The status quo at the economic and social level in Tunisia resulting from the lack of vision and policy in relation to the crisis
- The reform of the Constitution in Algeria that does however not lead to any major changes
- The total embargo in Libya, and the possible military intervention that could have an impact on the whole region
- The increasing number of human rights defenders that live outside Egypt due to the current situation in Egypt that is considered to be worse than at the time of Mubarak
- The dangerous situation for journalists and opponents in Turkey

North

- The exceptional regime that is becoming permanent in France
- The Danish law allowing the confiscation of refugees' valuables
- The national "protect the streets" movements that appear in Germany, Finland and Sweden and the increased violence against reception centres for asylum seekers
- The EU that is handing out money to regimes like Turkey that do not respect human rights obligations, this in order for these regimes to accept more refugees and thus avoid that these come to Europe
- The right to apply for asylum that has been in practice limited to nationals of a few countries, leaving the wrong impression that the inhabitants from other difficult countries do no longer have the right to apply for asylum
- The adoption of the revised ENP with a new approach on security rather than human rights (from rule of law to state of security)
- The weakening of the concept of citizenship on both sides of the Mediterranean that is linked to the weakness of the social policies
- The alarming discourse on refugees that is no longer rooted in the parties from the extreme right only
- Europe that used to be an example for the human rights defenders in the South when talking about human rights and freedoms in their respective countries - which it no longer is.

Following the evaluation of the situation in the region, Wadih Al-Asmar thought that it would be important not only to evaluate the situation in the region for the last five years but rather for the last 30 years. In that respect, there are more freedoms than before, he thought. Nabia Haddouche also noted that some major improvements have taken place, for instance in relation to Tunisia, and although not all rights are respected, the positive achievements should also be taken into account.

3. Report from the Secretariat

Moderator: Nabia Haddouche

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the report from the Secretariat (*see 3.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 8, July to October 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 *3.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 8, July to October 2015*). He noted that the Network is following more or less the commitments from the General Assembly in June 2015.

Working Groups

In relation to the set-up of the Working Groups, Isaías Barreñada questioned why some members, for instance the Greek Committee for Human Rights, had not been selected for any of the Working Group. Michel Tubiana noted that there are many criteria to take into account when setting up the Working Groups, while Nabia Haddouche suggested drafting some guidelines for the set-up of the next Working Groups.

EC participation

Wadih Al-Asmar expressed his concern that the EC members' participation in the missions, advocacy activities etc. seems to be weak, however Michel Tubiana noted that no missions had been organised without the participation of at least one of the EC members.

Justice

In relation to the programme on Justice, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that it was the Network's hope that the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs will fund the programme. The idea is to set up a meeting between the Justice and FOAA Working Groups on the fight against terrorism and its impact on Justice and FOAA.

Syria

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Network has organised a meeting with Syrian human rights defenders on the documentation of human rights violations as well as a training on advocacy missions. In addition staff has participated in a mission to Turkey, and a report is currently being drafted on this mission. In relation to the programme on Syria, Wadih Al-Asmar did not feel that he was well informed about the activities, and it was noted that he had not yet received the report from the meetings in Istanbul.

Migration

Catherine Teule informed that, within the EU, some European countries have decided on a list of "safe countries of origin" to be adopted, and that Turkey has been included among these countries whereas Germany has indicated Morocco and Algeria as "safe" origin countries. She suggested that the Network expressed its opinion on this issue. Michel Tubiana thought that the Migration Working Group should look into this issue together with Vincent Forest, and the EC members were invited to send their observations to the Working Group. Nabia Haddouche asked whether the Network can continue to work as before given the developments in the region in terms of migration and asylum. Michel Tubiana noted that the mechanisms within the Network have not changed; the Working Groups do not have any power without the EC, and the Working Groups' strategies have to be validated by the EC. The political referent shall evaluate when a certain issue requires a political debate.

Algeria

Nabia Haddouche asked whether EuroMed Rights would go on a mission to Tindouf even though some of the participants to the mission would not obtain the visa. However, Michel Tubiana answered by saying that EuroMed Rights intends to observe the human rights situation in the refugee camps that are under Algerian authority. The Network would not send a mission to Tindouf if any of the participants do not obtain the visa.

Decisions

- EuroMed Rights will only send a delegation to Algeria if all members of the Delegation are granted the visa for Algeria.

Documents:

3.1 EuroMed Rights Activity Review no. 8, July to October 2015 (*for information*)

3.2 Work Plan 2016 (*for information*)

4. Financial Report from the Secretariat, including update on Fundraising

Moderator: Catherine Teule

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the financial situation of the Network, including the news on fundraising.

Decision:

- The budgets were approved by the EC.

Documents:

4.1 Budgets and accounts (3 documents) (for approval)

4.2 Update on Fundraising (for information)

5. Gender Mainstreaming in the Network

Moderator: Wadih Al-Asmar

Nabia Haddouche informed that the Gender Working Group is preparing a gender strategy for 2016-18 that will be ready for the next EC meeting. She thought that the Network's work on gender should not remain limited to the gender mainstreaming efforts but the Network should revisit its work on gender and adjust it to the new context in the region. She noted that the Network has already a gender policy that is included in the Strategy for 2012-18 and adopted by the General Assembly in 2012. The gender policy is the road map for the Network's work on gender, in particular in terms of capacity building on human rights and democratic reforms. It was prepared in order to formalise the commitments of the Network in favour of women's rights promotion and internal gender mainstreaming of the Network, i.e. in its programmes, activities, reports and statements, and the Network has made a lot of progress in this regard. At the level of the member organisations, many trainings on gender mainstreaming have been organised. Finally, she mentioned that the EC, the political referent for gender and the Gender Working Group are responsible for setting the gender policy into action.

Michel Tubiana said that the Network has a very clear vision about the gender mainstreaming issue. The EC has had many debates on gender mainstreaming, including on the issue of the gender focal point monitoring gender related issues within the Working Groups which the EC has considered to be a good idea. However, according to Michel Tubiana, gender mainstreaming is in danger of becoming a kind of ritual without any real content. The Network should look into how the gender issue can be better linked to and integrated in the overall work of the Network, and he suggested this as a theme for the next gender audit. Catherine Teule agreed with Michel Tubiana that gender mainstreaming is very important although it should not become a ritual. Instead of having a gender focal point, she suggested to hold a meeting with the gender focal points on the issue of gender mainstreaming. Finally, she noted that, at the EU level, one of the main concerns is the violence against women in Europe.

Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the Network has made a lot of progress in relation to gender mainstreaming. In any Working Group, he said, it would be important to link what the members are doing in their daily work at the national level on one hand, and, on the other hand, the regional level. Violence against women could be one of these linkages between the national and the regional level. Marc Schade-Poulsen suggested that the Working Group should keep the focus at the EU mechanisms and for instance work on having Morocco sign the Istanbul Convention. Ramy Salhi noted that the context differs for the Working Group members who come from different countries, and he agreed with Marc Schade-Poulsen that violence against women could be a cross cutting regional issue.

Anitta Kynsilehto suggested enlarging the gender issue in the Working Group so it would not only be a question about parity, taking into consideration that the gender issue is more complicated than that, which Nabia Haddouche agreed with. Messaoud Romdhani noted that each country has its specificities as regards women issues, and the selected themes can therefore not be generalised.

Wadih Al-Asmar thought that the progress in terms of gender was mainly made internally, and although this work was necessary, it has become a technicality and the content has been forgotten. He thought that the main focus should be to choose the cross cutting issues for the region and create synergies with the other Working Groups. He agreed with Anitta Kynsilehto not to restrict the work of the Working Group to issues pertaining to women only, however it could lead to endless discussions if the concept of gender should be reviewed.

6. Advocacy Strategy Roadmap

Moderator: Isaías Barreñada

Vincent Forest presented the *6.1 Advocacy Strategy Roadmap* that should be used in order to see where the Network can have impact on certain issues and choose the relevant tools to obtain this possible impact. The Roadmap will allow the Network to move ahead with more specific strategies for the different programmes, thus defining the objectives of the advocacy on the short, middle and long term, as well as the partners and possible actions. Vincent Forest noted that the Roadmap has been revised in order to reflect the discussion at the last EC meeting on 9-11 October 2015.

Michel Tubiana said that any advocacy strategy requires a communication strategy. In his opinion, the EC should discuss the communication strategy again, being a major weakness of the Network from his point of view. Wadih Al-Asmar and Catherine Teule both agreed that the Communication Strategy should be improved in order to ensure a good Advocacy Strategy. Wadih Al-Asmar also thought that there are some imbalances between the two Strategies at the moment. Vincent Forest said that the advocacy actions cannot take place without the communication that is also integrated in the Advocacy Strategy. He added that every time a lobbying effort is organised, different communication efforts (interviews with the media, press conference etc.) are also considered.

Both Messaoud Romdhani and Isaías Barreñada asked for a clarification on the issue of partnerships with other organisations that would benefit from cooperation with the Network in terms of visibility (page 3), partnerships being the core business of the Network. Vincent Forest explained that sometimes the Network is perceived as a sub-contractor, putting together the content without being mentioned in the published statement. He therefore thought that the Network should revisit the format of some of the current partnerships. Michel Tubiana noted that the Network should always ask whether the partnership in question brings added value to the Network. Osman İŇçi thought that the Network could get more visibility if it cooperates with other partners but the Network should always react timely in order not to lose the momentum and ask the members to do the same. Marc Schade-Poulsen suggested rephrasing the sentence on partnerships in the Advocacy Strategy Roadmap as the document will be made official which Wadih Al-Asmar agreed with. Vincent Forest thought that, once the Advocacy Strategy Roadmap had been approved, the Network should look into the cooperation with partners and in some cases chose to do advocacy activities on its own in order to change the perception of the Network as a sub-contractor.

Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the Advocacy Strategy Roadmap is ambitious and would enlarge the advocacy efforts so not only the Brussels staff would be involved in these but all staff members. He added that the advocacy efforts also depend on whether the Network has members in the targeted country for advocacy, and he suggested that the Network should also include advocacy with national governments in the South in the Strategy.

Isaías Barreñada said that the added value of the Network is not only to make the voices of its members heard but also to influence the course of the events (page 1). He thought that the Roadmap focuses only on the national governments in Europe and the EU institutions, and that the advocacy with the national governments in the South is missing from the Roadmap. Michel Tubiana agreed with Isaías Barreñada although the limitations in relation to the advocacy with the national governments in the South should also be integrated in the Roadmap. In addition, the Network is absent in many European countries in the North. He added that it was an important component of the Roadmap to make the members heard.

Osman İŇçi suggested doing advocacy at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg besides the EU institutions, the member states, and the UN. Vincent Forest agreed that the advocacy with the Council of Europe could be developed, being the only institution that can visit countries without permission. Catherine Teule expressed the importance of not limiting the advocacy efforts to the different institutions but also focus on the countries and their civil society.

Isaías Barreñada noted that the situation in the countries in the South vary which should be taken into account in relation to the advocacy efforts. He furthermore suggested including members from the South in the Network's missions to avoid that these are perceived as missions from the North, and asking members for an update on their advocacy activities and contacts. Vincent Forest noted that the countries in the South are still approached on an ad hoc basis, and he added that the Network has not developed contacts with the

embassies of the countries in the South so far as it would entail a different approach. It could however be considered to approach a group of countries in the South. In relation to the missions, the Network usually contacts its members beforehand for an update on their activities, he said.

Osman İşçi then asked for an update on the Network's application for EcoSoc Status mentioned in the Advocacy Strategy Roadmap. Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Network has applied for the EcoSoc Status but that it can take up to 2-3 years before the Network receives an answer to the application. Once the Status would be obtained, the Network should send an Activity report to the UN on an annual basis.

Decision:

- The Advocacy Strategy Roadmap was approved by the EC, with the only observation that the Roadmap should also take into account the lobbying with the national governments in the North and the South.

Document:

6.1 Advocacy Strategy Roadmap (*for discussion*)

7. Strategy for the Programme on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

Moderator: Isaías Barreñada

Vincent Forest presented the *7.1 Strategy for the Programme on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians* that had been adopted by the PIP Working Group in November 2015. He noted that it was a three year strategy covering 2016-18, and that it consists of three lead themes and three support themes, enabling the Working Group to focus on a few issues only when meeting with the EU officials. For each theme, the expected outcome has been identified. This approach could be used for other Working Groups as well, he noted.

Marc Schade-Poulsen thought that it was interesting that the Strategy takes into account which governments influence other governments on some issues. The Network should try to identify the countries that have followers within the EU system and identify partners on the ground in order to have influence.

Anitta Kynsilehto found the Strategy impressive with a clear and specific targeted programme. Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Working Group members have worked together since 2001 and have since then developed joint strategies, focusing on the work of the members on the ground that can be used for lobbying at the EU institutions.

Isaías Barreñada expressed his surprise that Spain had been left out of the introductory discussion of the Strategy as one of the key EU countries in the North, in particular taking into consideration that it is the fourth largest donor to Palestine, and that it was the first country to recognise the PLO. Also Greece has been left out although it has been the only country to present its objections to the European Council on the issue of labelling. In line with this, Osman İşçi noted that Turkey was the first country to recognise Palestine. Marc Schade-Poulsen replied by saying that EuroMed Rights cannot do advocacy on all countries but that the Network is seeking to choose the countries that can influence others countries within the EU system.

Michel Tubiana noted that the Network has chosen to support the boycott of products from the occupied territories, and that some countries, for instance France, have also forbidden certain products from the territories. Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the PIP Working Group – as the Syria and Egypt Solidarity Groups – in general is composed by participants who are less than 35 years; it is positive that the young human rights generation is now emerging.

Decision:

- The Strategy for the Programme on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians was adopted by the EC.

Document:

7.1 Strategy for the Programme on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians (*for adoption*)

8. Results from the Solidarity Group on Egypt

Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto

Vincent Forest presented the *8.1 Minutes from the last meeting of the Solidarity Group on Egypt* that include the decisions and actions of the Solidarity Group in the coming months. He informed that the Network works with Amnesty International and other organisations on individual cases of human rights defenders in Egypt that are at risk. A travel ban is imposed on several human rights defenders which makes it difficult to ensure the participation of the Egyptian members of the Solidarity Group at the meetings. Other activities of the Solidarity Group include a study on EU-Egypt bilateral relations, a newsletter, a campaign and petition on detainees, as well as trial observation missions.

Michel Tubiana thought that, in relation to the travel ban against Egyptian human rights defenders, the Network should do advocacy at the national government level instead of the EU institutions. He added that during the Troika meeting on 13 January 2016, it had been suggested to organise a mission to Egypt although it might prove to be difficult. The format of the mission should be discussed with the Network's Egyptian members but he suggested inviting key personalities for the mission and organising it before the summer 2016. Wadih Al-Asmar expressed his doubts about whether the Network's delegation would be allowed to enter Egypt although Sisi is working on improving his image at the international level. Marc Schade-Poulsen thought that it should be an official mission with the purpose of meeting the authorities in Egypt which Michel Tubiana agreed with. Osman İşçi thought that the Network should meet with civil society in Egypt during the mission and be careful not to give credit to the Egyptian authorities. Finally, Messaoud Romdhani suggested studying the positions of the EU countries in relation to Egypt as these differ, France and the UK being examples of countries that have different positions.

Document:

8.1 Minutes from the last meeting of the Solidarity Group on Egypt (*for information*)

9. Strategy on Tunisia

Moderator: Anitta Kynsilehto

Ramy Salhi presented the *9.1 Summary of the activity report for 2015 and guiding principles for 2016* that includes the different activities of the Network in Tunisia; he noted that the Network is becoming a key actor in Tunisia, having activities with national and internal organisations based in Tunisia while supporting the Network's members and partners.

Nabia Haddouche thought that the Maghreb office has mainly focused on Tunisia so far and that the Maghreb dimension has been neglected to some extent. Ramy Salhi agreed that it has been difficult to activate the Maghreb dimension. The themes that are common to the Maghreb region are the judicial reform, women's rights, migration, and ecosoc, however due to some constraints the Libyan, Moroccan and Algerian dimensions have not been developed to a larger extent. He informed that some work on the UPR has been initiated in cooperation with the Network's partners in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco as these three countries have the same deadline for the UPR in 2017. The focus is now on how to have national dynamics that can lead to regional dynamics, he said. Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the office in Tunis is not yet a Maghreb office but an office for the countries of the Maghreb.

Catherine Teule asked whether the Maghreb office has participated in the work on the reform of the law on migration and asylum in Tunisia that seems to be blocked. Ramy Salhi answered that the office has participated in all discussions with the Tunisian government and the EU institutions on this issue; however the reform of the law on migration and asylum is not of great concern to the Tunisian government and the Network's members and partners have not mobilised on this issue due to other priorities.

Wadih Al-Asmar thought that, since its creation, the Maghreb office has been difficult to place in the structure of the Network, and the political steering and guidance of the office was not clear to him. Wadih Al-Asmar also asked for information on the involvement and role of the EC in the Maghreb office, as well as the Network's involvement in the reforms in Tunisia that should not lead to political interference. In relation to Jamaity created by the Maghreb office, he asked how the Network is assisting this project. Ramy Salhi answered by saying

that Messaoud Romdhani is participating in most of the activities of the Maghreb office and that the office is having regular consultations with Michel Tubiana. Flexibility is however needed in order to be able to implement the activities in the short term. As regards the Jamaity project, the Network has helped this project to grow since its creation in 2011. A part from the Network, the project is being supervised politically by the British Council and is also supported by the EU. The plan is that the project should be independent from the Network by June 2016.

Messaoud Romdhani informed the EC that the Network is playing a very important role in bringing international and national organisations together in Tunisia. He thought that the Network should look at the laws in Tunisia from a human rights – and not a political – perspective. In Tunisia, many laws are being prepared, i.e. on migration and asylum, LGBT, racism and discrimination, and the Network should work on these main concerns.

Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the Maghreb office is organising an annual meeting with members and partners in Tunisia in order to plan the activities, and that it tries to build the capacity of civil society to influence the political agenda in the field of human rights and work on thematics that are close to the Network.

Michel Tubiana noted that the lessons learnt in Tunisia could not necessarily be copied to other countries, however there is a need to create networks in each country that work together on different projects, for instance in Morocco, provided it can be funded. He was not of the opinion that the Network is considered to be allied with any political positions in Tunisia or be the spokesperson of the EU.

Isaías Barreñada suggested developing a regional approach in cooperation with the EU; however this would not be sufficient. He thought that, once established, the Working Group on EcoSoc should organise a regional activity that could concern all or some of the countries, ecosoc rights being a weakness in them all. It could also be considered to have a regional activity on LGBT and to take position and launch a debate on obstacles and actions in relation to this issue as a network, as many of the organisations working on LGBT have limited capacity. The issue of death penalty could also be considered. The Network should consider working with other networks in relation to some thematics related to values, culture and diversity. Ramy Salhi agreed with Isaías Barreñada although he mentioned that even the human rights defenders are reluctant to take a position on LGBT in Tunisia. He also thought that the national dynamics should be created before the regional dynamic.

Document:

9.1 Summary of the activity report for 2015 and guiding principles for 2016 (*for discussion*)

10. Discussion on EuroMed Rights' approach in relation to the countries in the Maghreb (participation of expert)

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

With the participation of Adallah Saaf

The EC had invited Adallah Saaf to discuss the current situation in the Maghreb and try to see how the Network can orient its work and actions in the Maghreb.

During his presentation, Adallah Saaf highlighted the following issues;

- The reforms and institutional changes in Morocco and Tunisia, and the recent Constitutional reform in Algeria as a first step towards the human rights principles
- The emergence of new actors and new alliances in the Maghreb
- The important progress towards the separation of powers (presidency and government) in Tunisia, whereas the presidential model is maintained in Algeria, and the combined system with a king and a parliamentary system is kept in Morocco.

A lengthy and exciting discussion between the EC members and Adallah Saaf followed this presentation.

11. Programme on Discrimination

Moderator: Messaoud Romdhani

Michel Tubiana presented the *11.1 Note on discrimination*. He noted that in the North and the South, islamophobia and racism are increasing, and discrimination can sometimes be found in the laws, in particular in the South. When tackling the discrimination issue, the Network could focus on religious minorities, cultural minority, sexual orientation, disabilities, and education. The Network could do a mapping on discrimination in the laws and in practice in the North and the South in order to reduce the scope of discrimination while relying on the international standards. Following the mapping, it could be envisaged to do a training for the Network's members about the different types of discrimination and their impact.

Anittta Kynsilehto agreed to have a mapping exercise as discrimination is a wide subject. She suggested focusing on sexual orientations, although there would be some disparities between the different countries in the EuroMed region. Messaoud Romdhani also agreed to the mapping and noted that there are countries like Tunisia that do not have any laws that protect people from racism and discrimination. In addition, racism against refugees is a burning issue, and, in the South, there are laws that criminalise LGBT. The growing racism in the North is also alarming, but at least there are laws against racism in the North, he noted. Isaías Barreñada also thought that the mapping would help the EC to understand the situation on the ground better. The Network should not only look into the legal perspective in the South but also the governments' indifference in relation to discrimination in the North.

Marc Schade-Poulsen thought that there was a risk that the mapping exercise could be endless as the topic of discrimination is enormous. He thought that the Network should focus on regional themes of interests to both the North and the South. In the North and the South, there is currently a debate on Islam and the Network should not be absent from this debate. He thought that priority actions on discrimination should be defined, and religious discrimination could be used as an entry point of interest to both the North and the South. The Network should also look into how to support the work of its members on discrimination.

Nabia Haddouche noted that racism was prohibited in the laws but that it was still seen in practice in Morocco. She was also in favour of a mapping that could give an idea of the situation in the different countries in the region. Osman İşçi noted that the first step would be to define discrimination in the region, and only one topic should be chosen, for instance discrimination against women or discrimination against migrants, to avoid that the topic will be too broad.

Wadih Al-Asmar noted that racism in the South is not perceived in the same way in the North, and the notion of racism should be defined and awareness of this notion should be created. According to him, two groups are victim of racism, i.e. the migrants and LGBT. He thought that islamophobia was more a problem pertaining to the North.

Ramy Salhi said that, in the law as well in practice, it would be impossible to cover all the thematics pertaining to discrimination in the region. The topic of religious minorities in the North and the South concern all countries and could be considered as the entry point for the work on discrimination. He suggested working on 2-3 countries in the North and South respectively. He thought that it should be a priority to mobilise the Network's members on individual freedoms.

Isaías Barreñada thought that an effort should be made to define the different thematics. He would prefer not to use the word racism but instead discrimination that would allow the Network to adopt a more legal approach and look at the laws in the different countries that encourage discriminatory practices – while analysing the practices and the role of the governments. He noted that racism was not only about racism North-South or South-South as there is also racism within Europe, for instance against the Roma people. Catherine Teule however thought that the notion of discrimination is more complicated and difficult to measure than the notion of racism.

Michel Tubiana agreed with Isaías Barreñada that the notion of racism has changed, and that it could be dealt with as part of discrimination. He thought that it would be important to make a mapping with targeted countries and shed the light on their discriminatory laws. The mapping should also be thematic, focusing for

instance on LGBT, religion, disabled persons. It should also be envisaged to organise a training on discrimination with the Network's members.

Decisions:

- The EC will discuss the issue of discrimination further at the next EC meeting
- Michel Tubiana will make a proposal for the work on discrimination for the next EC meeting

Document:

11.1 Note on discrimination (*for discussion*)

12. Membership issues

Moderator: Messaoud Romdhani

Decisions:

- People in Need, Czech Republic, was adopted as a Regular member
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Switzerland, was adopted as an Associate member.

Documents:

13.1 Membership application from People in Need, Czech Republic (*for approval*)

13.2 Membership application from Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Switzerland (*for approval*)

13.3 Overview of Members (*for information*)

13.4 Overview of Membership applications (*for information*)

13. Follow-up on the EC's internal communication

Moderator: Messaoud Romdhani

Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that a new software tool had been created for the EC members, however only one EC member is currently using the system. He therefore asked whether the old system with the distribution of emails should be used instead of the new system.

Michel Tubiana thought that the new system is too complicated, and he did not think that the few advantages of the system compensate for its complexity. Isaías Barreñada however thought that the EC members should make an effort to learn how to use the system as it has many advantages, also taking into consideration that the new business cards for the EC members contain their new email address. Catherine Teule suggested making a simple introduction to the system including print screens but Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that this document had already been distributed to the EC. Finally, Wadih Al-Asmar suggested using the system step by step, beginning with the exchange of messages and moving on to the editing of texts at a later stage.

Decision:

- The Communication Department should contact each EC member in order to know whether they have any problems in relation to the Outlook system.

14. Miscellaneous

Moderator: Michel Tubiana

a. *Dates for the next EC meeting*

Decisions:

- The EC members decided to consult the non-present EC members on the dates of 24-26 June 2016 for the next EC meeting (alternative dates could be 17-19 June 2016)

- The Secretariat should make suggestions for the venue to the EC (London could be considered)

b. Sabir conference in Sicilia

Decision:

- EuroMed Rights will participate in the Sabir conference. The Migration Working Group should coordinate the Network's participation in the conference.

c. Trial of Monjib

Decision:

- EuroMed Rights should contact Adala in order to know whether the Network should send observers for the trial of Monjib et al.

d. UN meeting on forced disappearances

Wadih Al-Asmar informed that he would participate in the session on the non-state actors at the UN meeting on forced disappearances in Rabat on 7 February 2016.

e. Trial of CNDH, Lebanon

Wadih Al-Asmar informed the EC that his trial was scheduled on 9 April 2016.