



EuroMed Rights  
EuroMed Droits  
الأورو-متوسطية للحقوق

## **11<sup>th</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EUROMED RIGHTS**

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**WORK PROGRAMME 2018 – 2021**

*submitted to the vote of the General Assembly*

**AND THE UNDERLYING STRATEGY**

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# EUROMED RIGHTS' WORK PROGRAMME

## 2018 – 2021

This work programme has been developed based on the annexed 2018 – 2021 strategy, and that was subject to a consultation of the members of the Network. Based on this programme the Executive Committee will, upon proposal by the Secretariat, adopt detailed annual activity plans at its meetings matching available funds and donor contracts.

The program is divided into three parts. The first describes the regional actions of EuroMed Rights and the second the actions at national level. The third part deals with EuroMed Rights methodology and organisation, including how it plans to strengthen integration of the different parts of its work.

### 1. REGIONAL WORK

This chapter describes how EuroMed Rights will respond to four major human rights concerns characterising the EuroMed region, notably the shrinking/ enabling spaces for civil society work; migrant and refugee rights; economic and social rights; women's rights and gender equality. In addition to dealing with these issues, EuroMed Rights will organise internal regional seminars on the question of respectively justice and the fighting of all forms of discrimination in order to reflect on EuroMed Rights' approach to these intervention areas.

#### 1.1 Enabling spaces for civil society work

This action will follow two strands. The *first* will focus on EuroMed Rights members and partners

- Monitoring the situation of civil society and its spaces for work
- Mainstreaming the question into all its working groups and solidarity groups ensuring that the question is addressed at the meetings of these groups
- Issuing briefs, fact sheets and statements when appropriate
- Setting-up advocacy meetings and conducting missions when these bring added value to ongoing work
- Seeking to maintain a safe place for HRDs and WRDs in need for temporary relocation.
- Organising 1 regional seminar aimed at experience sharing of EuroMed Rights members and development of joint actions
- Feeding the outcome of these activities into the Regional Hub for civil society organisations (CSOs)

The *second strand* concerns the Regional Hub for CSOs.

EuroMed Rights will here have the lead on a large range of activities aimed at enlarging spaces for civil society work. It will provide policy inputs from its work and promote participation of its members in the following activities:

- 10 Regional workshops over three years within the following areas of concern: 1) governance, 2) security and countering violence, 3) migration, and 4) economic development and social dialogue, while ensuring a gender equality perspective all through the process.
- 1 South Regional Policy Seminar per year addressing EU Policies related to the 4 themes
- 1 Civil Forum in Brussels per year aimed at dialogue with EU decision makers and at strengthening coordination of civil society in relation to EU policies
- Sub granting of national meetings related to the priority themes of the Hub
- The Regional Hub for CSOs will also set-up and maintain a regional digital internet platform for civil society groups

EuroMed Rights will also promote that the Hub can increase protection of members and partners at risk by seeking to ensure that they are invited to the meetings of the Hub, and in this way, improve their protection through the fact that they received official recognition.

It will encourage members, who have a particularly interest in following the Hub process and the question of shrinking spaces, to form a group in this regard. Finally, in the context of the Hub it will promote best practices from its dialogue experience at national level, notably in Tunisia and Morocco.

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *EuroMed Rights members increase their capacity to address the question of enabling/ shrinking spaces at national and regional level*
- *EuroMed Rights members address enabling/ shrinking spaces systematically in a EuroMed context*
- *EU and other governmental decision makers at regional and national level take note of EuroMed Rights and its members concerns*
- *Increased access of EuroMed Rights members and partners to other civil society networks in the region*
- *New enabling, safe spaces for civil society work and dialogue with authorities are established*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Increased coordination by EuroMed Rights members and partners of activities relating to the question of shrinking spaces*
- *The shrinking space issue is high on the agenda of the EU and key member states at regional and bi-lateral level*
- *Pressure on EuroMed Rights members and partners are reduced or kept at bay*
- *New enabling spaces are established for civil society work and for dialogue with the EU and national authorities*

## 1.2 Protection of migrant and refugee rights

The protection of migrant, refugee and asylum seekers rights will continue to be a key contested human rights area in the region over the next three years. Responding to the challenges emerging from this field EuroMed Rights will

- Further develop the work of its Working Group on Migration and Refugees as a resource and mutual learning site, for implementing as well as providing strategic, technical and professional responses to EuroMed decision makers on migration and refugee policies

- Contribute to develop networking of South and East Mediterranean civil society organisations enabling these to provide joint answers to European policies on mobility, border management and asylum related issues, and to where border control and related mechanisms put migrants and refugee rights at risk
- Develop civil society tools, trainings and policy briefs on EU migration and refugee externalisation policies, for example European mobility partnerships, readmission agreements, and the distinct question of 'safe countries'.
- Through missions and urgent action highlight situations where refugees and migrants, or civil society organisations defending their rights, are at risk due to restrictive governmental policies
- Sustain its Working Group on Migrant and Refugees in Tunisia and consolidate a similar one in Morocco in close cooperation with its local members and partners.
- Promote joint, sub-regional initiatives of civil society in North Africa on such as push backs of forced migrants, and to collectively respond to EU policies affecting the region.
- Promote sub regional networking of Lebanese, Jordanian and Turkish members and partners through regular workshops

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *EuroMed Rights members are enabled to situate their work in a broader regional context increasing their capacity to address the question of migrant and refugee protection at regional and national level*
- *EuroMed Rights and its members formulate joint policies regarding migrant and refugee protection impacting on the region within priority areas listed below*
- *Sub-regional networking of civil society organisation is strengthened in North Africa on the question of push-backs of migrants and refugees and regarding joint responses to EU policies*
- *Human rights organisations defending refugee rights in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey are empowered through networking to act on and react to national and regional initiatives affecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers*
- *Human rights organisations respectively in Tunisia and Morocco provide joint inputs to dialogues with EU and government representatives on national and bi-lateral initiatives affecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.*
- *Decision makers take note of EuroMed Rights and its members' recommendations within the priority areas listed below*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Increased collective and coordinated CSO response to EU and national policies on migration and refugees at EuroMed, sub-regional and national level*
- *EuroMed Rights/members and partners are regularly consulted at regional, sub-regional and national level on questions related to migrant and refugee protection*
- *Policies running counter to human rights protection are amended on some of the following items: readmission agreements, EU travel documents, safe country lists; national legislation criminalising unauthorised exit; a complaint mechanism vis-à-vis Frontex.*

### 1.3 Economic and social rights

Economic and social rights will constitute a key development area for the Network over the next three years, including integration of new members and partners in its work.

EuroMed Rights will establish a regional working group tasked with

- Developing TORs, monitoring and drafting of research based policy papers highlighting the extent to which EU free trade agreements and negotiations impact on the states' capacity to conduct social policies that is respectful of economic and social rights
- Developing recommendations and advocacy missions targeting the EU (in particular DG Trade) and SMC governments engaged in, or opening, deep free trade talks with the EU, in the first-place Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco
- Organising workshops for civil society organisations engaged in promoting economic and social rights, aimed at further supporting (Tunisia) or developing (Morocco and Jordan) civil society instruments for monitoring and discussing the impact of trade agreements on social policies.

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *EuroMed Rights members and partners dealing with economic and social rights are enabled to situate their work in a broader regional context empowering them to address the protection of these rights at regional and national level*
- *CSOs in the region are empowered to deal with free trade agreements and negotiations from a human rights perspective*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Alignment civil society demands in the SMPs and those of civil society in the EU with regard to the EU's negotiation and implementation of trade policies*
- *Increased collective and coordinated CSO response to EU Trade Policies in the SMP*
- *EuroMed Rights, members and partners become a dialogue partner of EU DG Trade, and governments of Jordan and Morocco*
- *Comprehensive impact assessment of a future DCFTA for Tunisia is carried out by the EU and the Tunisian authorities*

### 1.4 Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Women's rights and Gender Equality will continue to be one of EuroMed Rights priority areas.

EuroMed Rights will:

- Further develop EuroMed Rights' Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Right as a regional forum for exchange and policy development on the protecting and promotion of the standards of the CEDAW and as a forum of expertise on gender mainstreaming

- Develop tools for support of members and partners including on advocacy on the fight against VaW and impunity in this regard addressing relevant regional and international bodies
- Within the framework of the WG develop support for local CSOs on other women's rights and gender equality issues where results can be achieved. i.e. with regards to penal codes and civil codes (including issues such as the equal heritage issue and Muslim women's marriage with non-Muslim men)
- Through missions, statements, advocacy and workshops support women, including women's rights organisations at risk, or initiatives of organisations protecting and promoting women's rights
- Sustain working groups on women's rights and gender equality in Tunisia and Morocco and seek to develop synergies between the work of women's rights activists in the Maghreb.
- Monitor policies and initiatives of the EU, European Council and international bodies relevant to combatting VaW and fighting impunity and conducting advocacy in this regard when relevant

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Coordinated and/ or collective civil society response to key policies regarding women's rights and (VaW)*
- *EuroMed Rights members and partners have increased capacity to situate their work in a broader regional context reinforcing their local work in particular on VaW and discriminatory legislation*
- *Decision makers take EuroMed Rights and their members recommendations into account, in particular on VaW*

*Potential impact:*

- *Increased collective and coordinated CSO response to EU and national policies regarding VaW*
- *EuroMed Rights/members are systematically consulted at regional, sub-regional and national level on questions women's rights and gender equality*
- *Amendments of penal code provisions and other legislation increasing the protection of women's rights including as regards VaW*
- *Pressure on women's rights activists are reduced or kept at bay*

## 2. NATIONAL WORK

The following chapter describes EuroMed Rights actions at national level.

In relation to Europe, the Network will take steps to increase its presence on the European civil society scene, by setting-up a task force to look into how EuroMed Rights can engage more systematically with civil society organisations and networks in Europe based on its regional priority themes.

With regard to the SMC, EuroMed Rights plans to focus on 8 countries, from West to East: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Israel/Palestine, and Turkey. In order to strengthen the program coherence EuroMed Rights will to the maximum extent possible seek to integrate its thematic regional work with its national work, and vice versa. However, it must at the same time adapt to the situation in the individual countries and its members and partner's needs, as this has been a key to the successful implementation of its networking and advocacy methodology.

### 2.1 Morocco/ Western Sahara

EuroMed Rights has been working regularly with its Moroccan members and partners since its establishment. It will now in the coming years step up its work and develop a more systematic approach. It will

- Consolidate the presence of staff in the country
- Consolidate three thematic working groups on the question of the reform of the Judiciary; combatting violence against women in law and practice; and promoting migrant and refugee rights.
- On this basis, regularly evaluate results of past years EU-Morocco cooperation and make recommendations for future EU-Morocco Partnership Priorities
- Promote dialogue between human rights organisations, government institutions and the EU and promote the idea of tripartite dialogues between CSOs, the EU and the Moroccan government
- Support solidarity actions where human rights activists are at risk
- Facilitate networking of Moroccan associations with Tunisian and Algerian peers, on issues related to issues such as migrant and refugee rights and women's rights

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Spaces and contexts for networking and experience sharing among Moroccan human rights organisations are established around the themes of judiciary reform, promoting women's rights and combating VAW and promoting migrants and refugee's rights*
- *EuroMed Rights members and partners have reinforced policy capacities and are enabled to conduct joint advocacy for improved reform regarding the judiciary, women's rights and VaW, and migrant and refugee rights*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Strengthened consultative role of Moroccan civil society in EU-Morocco dealings pertaining to human rights and democratisation*

- *Strengthened focus by the EU and Moroccan authorities on the question of human rights respect in their relations and*
- *Strengthened focus on including civil society in EU-Morocco negotiations*

For Western Sahara, please see the Strategy document.

## 2.2 Algeria

EuroMed Rights believes it is important to continue the systematic solidarity work with Algerian civil society that it initiated in 2009. It will

- Organise focus group meetings with human rights organisations and human rights activists involved in international advocacy in order to share experiences
- Conduct advocacy activities and facilitate extension of contacts between Algerian members and partners with EuroMed Rights members, with professional groups (trade unions and lawyers) and CSOs in Europe on thematic issues, i.e. shrinking spaces, trade union freedoms, women's rights and VAW, migrant and refugee rights, accountability and enforced disappearance
- Monitor and document the human rights situation through regular field visits and close cooperation with Algerian member organisations and partners.
- Support Algerian human rights defenders at risk
- Facilitate contacts of Algerian associations with Tunisian and Moroccan peers, on issues related to such as migrant and refugee rights and women's rights, paying attention to the participation of youth and women.

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Spaces and contexts for networking and experience sharing among Algerian human rights organisations are developed around questions related to public freedoms, including trade union freedoms; women's rights and VAW; migrant and refugee rights; accountability and enforced disappearances*
- *EuroMed Rights members and partners have reinforced policy capabilities and are enabled to conduct joint advocacy for improved reform*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Algerian CSOs' capability and impact in terms of international advocacy and documentation of human rights violations has increased*
- *International networking and mobilization for the support and protection of Algerian CSOs has increased*
- *Decision makers take note of Algerian CSO's recommendations*

## 2.3 Tunisia

Tunisia has for long been a priority country for EuroMed Rights and will continue to be so, as EuroMed Rights finds it crucial to support civil society's role in the political transition. This will be done by

- Providing support and platforms for networking, policy making and experience-sharing for a wide spectrum of members and partners
- Continuing support to tri-partite dialogue between civil society, Tunisian officials (government, administration and assembly) and the EU on the question of the reform of the judiciary, women's rights, EU-Tunisia mobility partnership, and the DCFTA
- Providing support to CSO network's promoting and protecting personal rights
- Developing new modes of promoting human rights values through art
- Taking initiatives to increase support to CSOs outside the capital
- Conducting advocacy missions to key European countries to accompany CSOs that defend migrants, and economic and social rights.
- Promoting cooperation and synergies between Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan HROs, in particular on the question of migrant and refugee rights, and on women's rights and gender equality

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Existing spaces and contexts for networking and experience sharing among Tunisian CSOs are maintained and broadened and integrate representatives from Tunisia's marginalised regions, women and youth*
- *Tunisian CSOs have reinforced capabilities to conduct joint actions in relation to the human rights agendas of the Tunisian transition process*
- *Tunisian CSOs set priority themes in relation to the promotion of human rights on the legislative agenda of the National Parliament and EU-Tunisia negotiations*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Human right organisations maintain their key role in influencing national human rights and democracy agenda regarding legislation, institution building and participatory practices*

## 2.4 Egypt

Egypt has witnessed huge setbacks regarding human rights respect since 2013 endangering the existence of independent civil society, and the negative trend is likely to continue over the next three years requiring EuroMed Rights to continue its protection activities. EuroMed Rights will:

- Organise regular meetings of the solidarity group for Egyptian human rights defenders and promote international networking
- Ensure that the voices of Egyptian human rights defenders and organisations are echoed internationally and nationally by connecting these with international organisations and donors that can provide practical support
- Step up promotion of international solidarity and awareness about the situation of Egyptian human rights defenders, including women's rights defenders, and the environment in which they work. In this regard, conduct information and documentation activities targeting international media
- Step up advocacy activities in Brussels, Geneva, and in particular in EU member states, and other relevant important sites, to inform about the situation in the country and call governments to act

- Coordinate protection measures of HRDs and HROs at risk with other regional/ international human rights organisations
- Step up fair trial monitoring missions for human rights activists at risk and promote accountability initiatives for human rights crimes committed in Egypt

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Spaces and contexts for networking, experience sharing and strategizing of Egyptian human rights defenders are established with international human rights organisations on the question of sustaining Egyptian human rights organisations work, strengthening their capacity to work in the Egyptian / international context*
- *The voice of Egyptian human rights defenders and organisations are echoed internationally and nationally*
- *Decision makers at the EU, EU Member States and international level take note of the situation of the Egyptian human rights organisations in their dealing with the Egyptian authorities*
- *A number of Egyptian human rights activists are relocated outside Egypt*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Egyptian human rights organisations sustain their work inside and outside Egypt*
- *Human rights remain a structuring element of EU-Egypt relations*

## 2.5 Syria

The magnitude of the human rights crisis in Syria and the complete disrespect for the lives and safety of civilians requires continued attention of EuroMed Rights to Syria, its members and partners. EuroMed Rights will

- Engage in dialogue with its members and partners on how to develop a new phase of partnership and support
- Continue to support the fostering of networking between Syrian human rights groups, and between these and European CSOs
- Conduct advocacy with EU and EU member states to promote on the role of human rights, accountability and transitional justice in the current situation and that of a future Syria

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Spaces and contexts for networking, experience sharing and strategizing of Syrian human rights defenders are sustained and further empowered*
- *Sustained and increased capability of Syrian HRO to sustain the accountability agenda*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Syrian human rights organisations are privileged partners to international and regional bodies engaged conflict resolution in Syria*
- *The question of accountability for gross human rights violations and war crimes remains a structuring element in conflict resolution and peace talks on Syria*

## 2.6 Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory

EuroMed Rights will over the next three years continue its activities on EU policies pertaining to Israel and Palestine. It will:

- Continue to sustain the activities of the PIP WG as a critical human rights advocacy forum on EU policies pertaining to Israel and Palestine
- Conduct research based advocacy missions targeting the EU institutions and EU member states
- Continue its annual encounters on EU human rights advocacy for European, Arab, Israeli and Palestinian members and partners and continue cooperation with other initiatives
- Where relevant, support new networking initiatives among concerned organisations on key issues pertaining to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (such as on Palestinian prisoners, Palestinian refugees, Palestinian women, the International Criminal Court (ICC))
- Seek to engage in additional advocacy tracks, for example vis-à-vis the UN institutions, when relevant, in particular on the question of accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity; Israel's separation/ fragmentation policy and on prisoners' rights
- Support members' and partners' work on discrimination of Palestinian citizens of Israel; on Business and Human Rights; and on Palestinian Refugees
- Monitor the situation in both Israel and Palestine within its thematic fields of concern and take action on human rights violations, including violations of women's rights
- Support human rights defenders, including women's rights defenders, when under attack

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *A regional civil society advocacy forum capable of influencing civil society and decisions makers on the need for the EU and EuroMed governments to set the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law at the heart of peace promotion and efforts to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity remains high on the agenda of the EU*
- *Israel's fragmentation and segmentation policy remains a structuring concern of EU's relation with Israel/Palestine relations*
- *Releases of Palestinian prisoners by Israel*

## 2.7 Turkey

EuroMed Rights has been working regularly with its Turkish members and partners since its establishment. Due to the serious set-backs in the human rights situation it will in the coming years step up its work in the country. It will:

- Organise workshops with human rights activists, national and international legal experts to review the situation of human rights defenders as well as to plan and strategize on a common approach to the ongoing cases brought against them
- Develop a mapping of current court cases against individual human rights defenders and organisations
- Conduct regular fair trial monitoring of court cases (by local and international observers) against human rights defenders
- Mobilise national and international attention around court cases and police investigations

- Organise advocacy meetings addressing Turkish and European authorities

*EuroMed Rights will aim at the following outcomes of the activities:*

- *Increase protection of human rights defenders using their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly to highlight violations through fair trial monitoring*
- *Increase the capability of human rights defenders and their organisations to face legal proceedings*
- *Turkish and European authorities take note of recommendations presented through advocacy actions for the removal of practical and legal restrictions on human rights defenders' work*

*EuroMed Rights expects the impact to be:*

- *Coordination of civil society initiatives to protect human rights defenders through trial monitoring and advocacy is strengthened.*
- *Systematic follow-up of ongoing legal cases against human rights defenders, which are in breach of international human rights standards, are established and regularly updated.*
- *Increased national and international awareness raising about the legal and/or physical attacks against human rights defenders restricting their space of action.*

### **3. ON METHODOLOGICAL AND ORGANISATIONAL MATTERS**

#### **3.1 On internal cohesion**

The Network will seek to address the challenges it faced during the past three years of an increased compartmentalising of activities in country and regional projects with limited possibility of interaction between these, and hence limiting the learning opportunities of members from being part of a regional network.

First of all, EuroMed Rights will organise an annual seminar to which participants in its regional and national working groups will be invited as well as member organisations that are not part of any working group. The seminars are primarily meant as learning experiences that can be used as inputs to the working groups' or members' own work or as cross cutting development areas of the Network. The seminars will deal with respectively 1) the question of shrinking/ enabling spaces for civil society; 2) Justice; and 3) Discrimination.

Second, EuroMed Rights will ensure that organisations participating in the Network's different group work at national level will be nominated to attend the regional thematic working groups to strengthen links between the two settings.

Thirdly, it will increasingly seek to organise thematic working group meetings back-to-back with other thematic regional or national working group meetings to develop spaces for encounters on issues of common concern.

Finally, it will support participation of EuroMed Rights members in national solidarity groups beyond those from the country in question.

### 3.2 On monitoring and evaluation

EuroMed Rights will before the end of 2018, with the help of an external consultant and the financial assistance of SIDA, finalise the setting-up of its strategic planning tools including a Theory of Change, evaluation tools, risk assessment and a conflict sensitive approach.

### 3.3 On Gender Mainstreaming

EuroMed Rights will continue work along the track of consolidating a Gender Focal Point (GFP) sub-committee composed of all GFPs to meet at least yearly, and ensuring that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of the strategies and actions of all Solidarity groups and Working Groups. Furthermore, EuroMed Rights will move the responsibility for gender mainstreaming away from the working group on women's rights and gender equality and place it at the highest political level with the Executive Committee, while delegating practical responsibility for supporting gender mainstreaming efforts, including capacity building of staff and support to members, to staff. This aims at ensuring continued political will, organisational culture, technical capacity and accountability for gender mainstreaming within the organisation.

# STRATEGY 2018-2021

## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents EuroMed Rights strategy for 2018-2021 that replaces the 2012-2018 strategy adopted at the 9<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Network in Copenhagen.

It is drafted for a three years' period, the time span between two General Assemblies. Given the volatility of the situation in the EuroMed region it makes sense not to fix strategic choices beyond that time span.

As the General Assembly, per the statutes, sets *'out the programme of activities upon recommendation of the executive committee'*, the strategy will include the main points of this program in annex as well.

The introduction of this paper is a reminder of the fundamental principles guiding EuroMed Rights' action. It is followed by three sections describing how the Network over the next three years will respond to the challenges facing the region through 1) its regional activities, 2) its country approach and 3) its methodological and organisational framework.

The draft strategy that is presented to the General Assembly is the outcome of a consultation process with the members<sup>1</sup>, Executive Committee and staff. It also takes into consideration an external evaluation of EuroMed Rights' action between 2014 and 2016 that was commissioned by SIDA<sup>2</sup>. Finally, it builds on the experiences gained by EuroMed Rights during the implementation of the 2015-2018 activities.

## 1. EuroMed Rights background, mission and values

### 1.1 Background and specificity

Triggered by the EU led establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995, EuroMed Rights was founded on the idea that civil society in the EU and around the shores of the Mediterranean, i.e. in the 'EuroMed region'<sup>3</sup>, believe in a common destiny and have a mutual interest in working closer with one another in protecting and promoting human rights.

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the 12 members organisations represented in the Executive Committee, a total of 17 member organisations forwarded comments – equally distributed between North and South.

<sup>2</sup> Evaluation of EuroMed Rights Network's Promotion of Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa, Final Report, 28 September 2017 from Niras Indvelop.

<sup>3</sup> Understood here as the EU countries plus Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

EuroMed Rights gains its strength from being a regional, transnational organisation. It is one of the few settings where civil society organisations from all strands of the Euro-Med region meet at equal level to work together, while providing regional civil society responses to issues of regional and national concern.

### *1.2 Vision, mission, key values and offers to members*

EuroMed Rights' vision is to be a regional human rights forum that is a major source of knowledge to human rights and democracy stakeholders in the region acting to promote and protect human rights and democratic reform in the EuroMed region.

The mission of EuroMed Rights is to promote and strengthen human rights and democratic reform within its regional mandate through civil society networking and cooperation. Rooted in civil society, the Network seeks to develop and strengthen partnerships between CSOs in the EuroMed region, disseminate human rights values, advocate for these and increase the capacities of civil society actors in this regard

Key values that guide and shape the actions of the Network are based on its statutes and include the following:

- Recognising and promoting the fundamental universality, indivisibility, interdependency and interrelation of all human rights, individual as well as collective rights
- Respecting democratic principles and the rule of law as outlined in various international conventions and humanitarian law
- Supporting civil society as a key player in the promotion and protection of human rights and the right for civil society to be an active partner to decision making in this regard

Gender equality and the importance of highlighting and actively promoting the rights of women and women's participation in public life, as contributions towards closing the gender gap, are of specific importance to EuroMed Rights. Hence the Network aims at mainstreaming gender into all its work, both internal and external, with the goal of obtaining gender equality. As part hereof, the Network develops specific actions aimed at concretely promoting gender equality in the region.

EuroMed Rights aims to offer the following to its members

- Access to human rights CSOs in thirty countries including increased possibility for coordination, cooperation and solidarity
- Access to governmental and inter-governmental institutions and policy processes
- Possibility to influence regional policies and debates
- Increased protection where members or their work are at risk
- International/ regional support to their work within EuroMed Rights' priority areas
- Training activities in areas of EuroMed Rights' core competences
- Dissemination of their work to a broad regional audience
- Acknowledgement by being recognised as a EuroMed Rights member by 70 leading human rights CSOs in the region

## 2. EuroMed Rights response to the human rights challenges in the region

The political configurations of the EuroMed Region have undergone significant changes, both in the North and in the South of the Mediterranean, since the last EuroMed Rights Strategy was adopted.

The 2011 uprisings in Arab countries resulted in irreversibly changes in the political dynamics of the region, that for most parts however led to a regression of democratic processes. Also, the EU zone witnessed significant changes that shifted development away from ds more integration of the EU member states, the most extreme example being the Brexit.

In the EuroMed region basic human rights concerns and challenges to human rights work do, in varying degrees, remain the same, if not more challenging than before.

Based on its vision, mission and key values, the Network will over the next three years respond to these by supporting the autonomy and independence of civil society and facilitating partnership and coordination, including through protecting human rights defenders. It will also engage in a critical dialogue with governments and intergovernmental bodies and seeks to influence decision makers.

EuroMed Rights will during the next 3-year period, seek presence where the most influential human rights and democracy processes take place and where it can bring added value to its members' and partners' work.

More specifically, the Network will invest in four major EuroMed human rights issues of concern at regional level, 1) the question of the shrinking spaces for civil society work, 2) the rights of migrants and refugees, 3) economic and social rights of the citizens of the region and 4) women's rights and gender equality. At the same time, it will develop initiatives on the question of the judiciaries and the issue of fighting all forms of discrimination.

At national level, EuroMed Rights will respond to the human rights situation in the different SMC countries and in close cooperation with its members in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey develop actions that brings added value to their local work based on results obtained in the past.

The Network will also take steps to increase its presence on the European civil society scene based on its regional priority themes.

Finally, it will step-up advocacy at EU Capital level and at national level in the SMC where feasible. This will be supported by information and communication work.

### **PART 1: EUROMED RIGHTS REGIONAL WORK**

The EuroMed region is complex, tense and volatile, and a range of factors causing this situation lies largely outside the 'sphere of influence' of EuroMed relations as they stem from policies of global and regional powers (e.g. the situation in

Syria and in Israel/ Palestine), of international institutions and financial actors, of world economy fluctuations and trade policies, climate change, global social imbalances, etc. However, there are specific dynamics pertaining to the region that will shape the human rights and civil society situation in the coming years. These concern 1) the enabling/shrinking spaces for civil society, 2) migrant and refugee protection, 3) the impact of economic and financial relations on economic and social rights, and 4) the question of women's rights and gender equality.

EuroMed Rights will maintain and develop regional activities around these four themes.

They are chosen on the assumptions, 1) that EU-SMC relations in these fields contain regional mechanisms and instruments that the Network, and its members, can address in an impactful way; 2) that EuroMed Rights members and partners in the different parts of the region have an immediate interest in addressing these issues as they touch upon their daily work.

Next to these priority areas EuroMed Rights will commit itself to develop work on two themes: the situation of justice in the region and the question of fighting all forms of discrimination, including the question of discrimination of LGBTs. EuroMed Rights will support initiatives in this regard at regional level among its members but also with members and partners that are particularly concerned with these issues.

### 1.1 Enabling/ shrinking spaces for civil society work

Enabling spaces for civil society work are the life blood of democracy and human rights promotion, of its organisations and activists, their networks and partnerships at national and regional level.

#### *Context*

The EuroMed region is currently witnessing radical restrictions in the spaces for civil society work ranging from threats of physical extinction of activists in for example Syria and Libya; the adoption of laws such as the 2017 NGO law in Egypt that, if implemented, will make independent civil society work impossible; the massive clamp-down on civil society forces in Turkey; campaigns against Israeli NGOs defending Palestinian rights, harassment of human rights activists in Algeria and Morocco, attacks against women's rights defenders, and so forth.

Set-backs and interference in civil society work has also been noted in the EU, for example with cases of criminalising groups seeking to help forced migrants in for example Denmark, France and Italy, but also in relation to anti-terror legislation and government cut-downs on subsidies to civil society work.

Shrinking spaces for civil society can be observed at a global level, but has also specific EuroMed dynamics. Hence, the EU in its Neighbourhood Policy has taken principled stands, supported by a range of EU member states, to support civil society as a matter of priority. The EU also established several instruments<sup>4</sup> where the question of shrinking spaces can be addressed in a meaningful way. It will be crucial to invest in these specific regional dynamics over the next three years.

## *Objectives*

A main area of EuroMed Rights work over the next three years will concern the question of the enabling/shrinking spaces for civil society work. EuroMed Rights will build on its past work through the following engagements:

It will, within its regional thematic and national work, monitor the situation of civil society as it relates to freedom of expression, freedom of association (including access to funding), of peaceful assembly, of movement and right to political participation (including access to dialogue with national authorities), while seeking to facilitate, where feasible, the development of spaces for dialogue between human rights organisations (and CSOs at large) and national and regional authorities. It will in this process keep a close eye on whether EU instruments are coherently and consistently applied and that reforms in this field are respectful of international human rights standards

EuroMed Rights will mainstream its work on civil society spaces enabling it to react on specific country situations when relevant, to publish policy briefs and organise missions when attacks on human rights defenders occur, including trial observations.

Outputs from EuroMed Rights work will be fed into the regional and bi-lateral dialogues of the Network and its members with the EU and EU member states as well as with relevant SMC authorities. It will also be fed into the Regional Hub for civil society organisations:

### *1.1.1 Regional Hub for civil society organisations*

EuroMed Rights will during the next three years have the lead in establishing and developing a Civil Society hub aimed at reinforcing regional dialogue between civil society organisations in the SMC, but also between CSOs in the EU and the SMC.

The Hub is set-up in cooperation with leading regional civil society networks: SOLIDAR, EuroMed Network France (REF), Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) and Moroccan Forum for Alternatives (FMAS).

The Hub will structure its work under four headings matching four regional EU-SMC dynamics, namely 1) governance, 2) security and countering violence, 3) migration, and 4) economic development and social dialogue, while ensuring a gender equality perspective throughout the process.

The Action will bring several hundred CSOs together in workshops and seminars, it will facilitate exchanges and networking between these as well as contacts to decision makers, while leading to an annual Civil Forum for dialogue between CSO representatives and High Officials of the EU.

The main objective of EuroMed Rights for engaging in this activity is to facilitate members' and partners' access to and exchanges with other civil society groups and networks in the region.

The process of dialogue with the EU will in the best of cases facilitate the strengthening and/ or emergence of enabling safe spaces for civil society work and dialogue with authorities which is missing today.

## 1.2 Protection of migrant and refugee rights

### *Context*

The issue of migrant and refugee protection is a matter of global concern and not confined to the EuroMed Region, neither are the solutions to the immense challenges caused by forced migration.

However, protection of refugee, asylum seekers and migrant rights is likely to become the major shared human rights concern of the region over the next three years. Due to the continued war in Syria and the presence of Palestinian refugees, the Mashrek is witnessing the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, while the Mediterranean Sea has become the largest cemetery for people on the move.

The refugee crisis has become a structuring element of both EU and individual EU member states policies addressing the region. These policies will have a regional impact *beyond* the immediate concern for migrant and refugee protection, since the EU, in its efforts to stem refugee flows, has proven willing to make deals with authoritarian governments and non-state actors in the South Mediterranean that not only infringes on migrants' and refugees' rights, but also limits the EU and member states' leverage on governments of the South with regard to human rights and democracy promotion.

### *Objectives*

EuroMed Rights will over the next three years continue its work on migrant and refugee protection and address the current regional political dynamics in this regard.

EuroMed Rights will monitor EU and governmental agreements, react to these and advocate to promote free, safe and fair mobility in the region. It will work to ensure that EU agencies involved in dealing with migrants and refugees at the borders are held accountable for the human rights incidents of their action, and that refugees can access the EU territory as they are entitled to, including effective access to clear and easy procedures as well as effective access to free judicial counsel and to NGOs.

EuroMed Rights will continue to sustain the work of its Regional Working Group on Migration and Refugees as a resource and mutual learning site for civil society, for implementing as well as providing strategic, technical and professional responses to EuroMed decision makers on migration and refugee policies.

In addition, EuroMed Rights will support its Working Group on Migrant and Refugees in Tunisia and seek to develop a similar one in Morocco in close cooperation with its local members and partners. It plans to benefit from its presence in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and its contacts in Libya, to promote joint, sub-regional initiatives between human rights organisations dealing with migrant and refugee rights on such as push backs of forced migrants, and to collectively respond to EU policies affecting the Maghreb countries.

Finally, EuroMed Rights also wishes to engage pro-actively in the Syrian refugee crisis. It will seek to promote sub regional networking of Lebanese, Jordanian and Turkish members and partners on the rights of migrants and refugees aimed at strengthening the voice of civil society in governmental dealings and dealings with the EU

This would also include suggestions for how to tackle the promotion of the rights of refugees in a context where the host population itself suffers from lack of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

### 1.3 Economic and social rights

#### *Context*

The question of *economic and social rights* is a key human rights issue in the relation between the EU and the SMCs as the widespread neglect of these rights, both in the North and the South, continued fuel discontent in the region. EU-SMC relations are embedded in economic and financial flows that take place in a global context of increased market liberalization, and they are influenced by international institutions that reach far beyond the EuroMed region.

However, the economic benefits that include the fact that the EU is a main trading partner of most SMCs, that migrants' remittances to their home countries account for billions of euros per year and that direct EU and indirect economic support/subventions to the region reach an annual total of several billion Euros are indicators of the significance of EuroMed relations.

Furthermore, free trade was spearheaded by the Barcelona Process starting in 1995, and later by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), and current negotiations of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs) under the supervision of EU DG Trade, will have major impact on the rights of the citizens in the region. This calls for an engagement by civil society and human rights activists in these issues.

#### *Objectives*

Hence, the Network suggests developing activities in the field of economic and social rights. It will do so on the basis of a regional seminar organised in 2016<sup>5</sup> aimed at identifying EuroMed Rights' added value to be addressing free trade agreements as well as two reports that were issued in this context<sup>6</sup>. Focus will be on strengthening relations between human rights organisations/ civil societies, including social movements, in the SMC and the EU, aimed at promoting trade agreements that are respectful of economic and social rights and on the rights of citizens to participate in the process of defining these policies.

EuroMed Rights will establish a regional working group to empower EuroMed Rights and its members to engage in these questions.

As relatively few Network members developed expertise to deal with the above-mentioned issue, the theme will constitute a field for building capacity of members on economic and social rights, attracting new EuroMed Rights members and partners among organisations or social movements in the North and the South with capacity and motivation to participate in the activities. In this regard, EuroMed Rights will also aim at attracting organisations that work with new modes activism leaving space open to experiment with ways of engaging around human rights issues.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Discussing challenges for civil society and the promotion of economic and social rights

<sup>6</sup> Analysing the economic and financial relations between the European Union and the South Mediterranean Countries; EuroMed Rights 2016; Assessing civil society initiatives in the field of economic and social rights, EuroMed Rights 2016

## 1.4 Women's Rights and Gender Equality

### *Context*

Gender inequality remains one of the most visible discrimination issues in the whole EuroMed region with a lack of equal representation of women with men in public affairs, a lack of equal wages and widespread violence against women (VaW) in public and private spheres. It is more visible in the South where women's participation in the work force falls behind the rest of the world, where SMC governments persist in maintaining reservations to key articles of the CEDAW and where civil codes based on religious affiliation prevail.

The question of women's rights seems to be an area where human rights progress, although sometimes minimal, have been made, as witnessed by legislative reforms carried out in several South countries during the past few years. Furthermore, the fact that the question of the women's role in society is one of the few items dealt with at regionally inter-governmental level, notably the Union for the Mediterranean, is an indication thereof. In addition, there are several mechanisms and instruments with a regional scope that provide platforms for civil society action such as the standard setting Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the EU's Action Plan 2016-20 'Transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations', and EU guidelines on combatting VaW, etc.

### *Objectives*

The Network wish to build on its past work and use the combat of VaW as one important entry point for working on and discussing gender inequality and women's rights. VaW is one of the worst kinds of discriminations that women are facing across the EuroMed region and one that constitutes a major obstacle towards gender equality. Its eradication is closely linked to the respect of all provisions of the CEDAW and work in this regard. VaW is also an issue that actors across the board, including governments and civil society agree on combatting in principle.

Over the next 3 years, EuroMed Rights will continue using the Istanbul Convention as a tool to combat VaW by working closely with civil society on both awareness raising about the Convention as well as advocacy towards decision makers on ratifying or acceding to the Convention or aligning VaW legislation with the Convention. The Istanbul Convention remains the most comprehensively binding instrument in Europe to combat VaW, and it is open for ratification also for non-CoE member states

EuroMed Rights will also seek to develop sustained work on other reform issues as the question of civil codes and discriminatory legislation in the region, for example the question of inheritance

In addition, EuroMed Rights will work on other regional instruments and mechanisms such as UfM meetings on the role of women in society, EU Guide lines on Combatting VaW and the EU's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Working Plan. In this regard EuroMed Rights will maintain the EuroMed Rights Working Group on Gender Equality and Women's Right as a regional forum for exchange and policy development on the protecting and promotion of the international norms and standards of the CEDAW. It will also maintain the WG in Tunisia and seek to develop one in Morocco.

EuroMed Rights will also separate responsibility for gender mainstreaming from the Working Group and place the political responsibility with the Executive Committee, while delegating the practical responsibility and action to staff. Member organisations with particular expertise on gender mainstreaming will be consulted in this process.

Finally, EuroMed Rights will intensify the process of identifying and adopting at least one member organisation per country with women's rights and gender equality expertise.

## **PART 2: EUROMED RIGHTS COUNTRY APPROACH**

EuroMed Rights has during the past three years reinforced its work at country level based on the consideration that although the Network gains strength and cohesion from being a regional, transnational organisation, the most influential political processes take place at national and bi-lateral levels.

EuroMed Rights will pursue its specific programmes on Israel and Palestine, on Syria, on Egypt, and step-up activities in Turkey establishing a specific program of trial monitoring of cases against human rights organisations and activists. As mentioned above, it will seek to promote networking at sub regional level in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey on the question of refugee protection.

In the Maghreb, it will continue its work in Tunisia and Algeria and develop its new program in Morocco. Through its sub-regional office for the Maghreb countries and its thematic regional work, it will seek to develop synergies between the three countries notably on the question of migration and refugee protection and on women's rights and gender equality. It will keep a keen eye on possibilities to upgrade its work in Libya when the opportunity arises.

A large part of EuroMed Rights work at national and bi-lateral level will be conducted under its thematic headings. However, as the Network must stay political relevant to its members' and partners' priorities it will also pursue work on accountability in the Syrian and Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and on judicial reform in Tunisia and Morocco. It will remain open to new developments and the emergence of new actors at national level such as those groups engaged in protecting individual freedoms and freedom of conscience in Tunisia.

Finally, with regard to Europe it will monitor general developments and engage in European issues where its work on its regional thematic priorities can be of added value.

### **2.1 Morocco and Western Sahara**

#### *Context*

In Morocco, the human rights and civil society situation developed in two directions. A new Constitution in 2011 appears as the most human rights and civil society friendly to date consecrating the principle of equality and non-discrimination, promoting reform of the judiciary and highlighting the role of civil society. A range of civil society associations, and the National Human Rights Council, contributed to and advocated for the 'translation' of the Constitution into legislation that is respectful of human rights resulting in some achievements. However, other human rights groups have been persecuted

when challenging the power of the Monarchy on the basis of international human rights norms and numerous social movements are signs of widespread social discontent.

#### *Past actions and objectives*

Following consultation with its members, EuroMed Rights wishes to systematise its work in Morocco by seeking to be permanently present in the country. EuroMed Rights' presence is aimed at strengthening networking of Moroccan human rights organisations, advocating for human rights reform and contributing to the protection of human rights defenders.

EuroMed Rights will focus on three themes for networking: reform of the Judiciary; women's rights and combatting violence against women in law and practice; and promoting migrant and refugee rights. On this basis, it will seek to promote dialogue between human rights organisations, government institutions and the EU.

In relation to Western Sahara EuroMed Rights will continue to monitor the situation of the local population while pursuing efforts to visit Tindouf (until now it was denied access by the Algerian authorities) following-up on a previous mission to El Ayoun and Tan Tan to obtain a first-hand overview of the human rights situation of the Sahrawi population.

## 2.2 Algeria

#### *Context*

In Algeria, repressive laws and regulations, in particular regulating freedom of expression, association and assembly, are used to stifle human rights activities while access of foreign observers and human rights organisations is restricted by the authorities. Human rights defenders face judicial harassment and arrests. The regime continues isolating them from the international scene and creates divisions *inter alia* by establishing government controlled 'NGOs'. International organisations and Western diplomacies, including key EU member states, did not seek to use their leverage on Algeria with regards to human rights while European CSOs and governments generally lack information on the human rights situation in Algeria.

#### *Objectives*

Continued international solidarity with Algerian human rights organisations and human rights defenders is needed to bridge their divides and bring them out of their isolation.

EuroMed Rights believes it is important to continue its work with Algerian civil society, despite obstacles set-up by the authorities, and contribute over the next three years to further empower of the human rights organisations to promote and protect human rights, including women's rights.

For this purpose, it will organise focus group meetings, conduct advocacy activities, facilitate extension of contacts between Algerian members and partners with professional groups and CSOs in Europe, monitor and document the human rights situation and facilitate contacts of Algerian associations with Tunisian and Moroccan peers.

## 2.3 Tunisia

### *Context*

In Tunisia, after the successful first phase of political and democratic transition, including the adoption of a Constitution that respects human rights and gender equality, and the holding of democratic legislative and presidential elections, the country is in a precarious economic, social and security situation aggravated by an unstable regional context. In this tense climate, civil society faces the challenge of countering potential backlashes to the old system while accompanying the process of reforming and implementing laws in accordance with the new Constitution, as well as ensuring that the constitutional bodies play their democratic role.

### *Objectives*

EuroMed Rights' office for the Maghreb countries has after 2011 successfully supported CSOs in moving Tunisia out of political deadlocks, shaping the new constitution, monitoring and contributing to its current implementation.

Over the next three years EuroMed Rights aims to continue along the past track empowering Tunisian civil society to constantly adapt to changing political situations and to influence national human rights, women's rights and democracy agendas as well as EU policies regarding Tunisia.

This will be done by providing support and platforms for networking and experience-sharing for a wide spectrum of members and partners and integrating newly-established organisations in these activities, notably those based in remote areas of Tunisia. A strong focus will be on mainstreaming women and youth into all activities.

EuroMed Rights will continue the successful promotion of tri-partite dialogue between CSOs, the EU Delegation and Tunisian authorities on the basis of working groups on justice, women's rights, migrant and refugee rights, and on free trade negotiations and economic and social rights, bringing together 80 Tunisian CSOs on a regular basis.

Furthermore, it will support the coordination of CSOs on the question of personal freedoms, and the use of art in promoting a human rights culture.

## 2.4 Egypt

### *Context*

Following Sisi's coming to power, Egypt has witnessed an unprecedented level of human rights violations and clampdown on Egyptian civil society in the fields of democracy, development, culture, human rights and women's rights, in addition to the systematic persecution of Muslim Brotherhood affiliates and supporters.

The authorities seem determined to eliminate the Egyptian rights movement through various attacks against human rights organisations and activists. This includes the imposition of travel bans on human rights defenders, threats to their lives, extensive pre-trial detention, and the imposition of long prison sentences while organisational or private accounts are frozen. Lately, a new draft NGO law was adopted by the Egyptian Parliament ensuring tighter control by the authorities over CSOs, and severely narrowing the scope of NGO activity, in particular that of human rights work.

### *Objectives*

EuroMed Rights will continue the systematic work it initiated in 2015 where it, in coordination with the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies and the EMHRF, organised Egypt Solidarity Group meetings, i.e. regular meetings attended by representatives of Egyptian human rights organisations inside Egypt and abroad, with leading international human rights NGOs and also donor agencies.

This Egypt Solidarity Group is one of few spaces for joint reflexion and strategizing on how to act on the situation of human rights defenders in Egypt.

EuroMed Rights will also continue solidarity missions and trial monitoring of emblematic cases against human rights activists, including women's rights defenders, and seek making sure, through advocacy, that human rights remain an important issue on the EU's agenda related to Egypt.

## 2.5 Syria

### *Context*

The situation in Syria has developed into a brutal war, with several hundred thousand Syrians being killed and millions being internally displaced or having fled the country. While a climate of impunity is reigning for gross and systematic human rights violations, including against women and children, the conflict remains fragmented and multifaceted as regional and international powers settle their accounts and interests.

The impact of the Syrian war on the number of refugees, and the 'refugee crisis' it provoked in Europe, has led the EU and leading member states to down scale their demands for an accountability and transitional justice agenda in order to reach a settlement between the warring parties, while at the same time, the UN General Assembly established the International, Independent Investigation Mechanism on Syria (IIIM).

Meanwhile, human rights work inside the country became increasingly dangerous and many human rights activists fled Syria and established/ consolidated human rights organisations outside the country.

### *Objectives*

During the past three years, EuroMed Rights conducted training workshops for members and partners inside and outside Syria that are involved in the crucial work of documenting human rights violations by all parties to the conflict, including violence against women. It developed training tool kits, and it organised highly appreciated coordination meetings and advocacy missions with Syrian organisations.

It consolidated a Syrian Action Group (SAG) as one of few sites where common visions for cooperation translated into action plans with impacts on the work and sustainability of Syrian human rights organisations.

This led the Syrian groups to become key purveyors of information to the COI, to EU member states, to European prosecuting units, to international human rights organisations, etc.

EuroMed Rights wishes over the next three years to support Syrian human rights groups in fostering networking and in conducting advocacy on the role of human rights, accountability and transitional justice in Syria.

## 2.6 Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territory

### *Context*

Israel's continuous occupation and entrenched fragmentation of the Palestinian Territory, together with increasing discrimination of the Palestinian citizens of Israel, lies at the root of the daily violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the region. Its impact reaches far beyond the countries that are directly involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Hamas and the Palestinian Authority have added to this deteriorating situation through their encroachment of fundamental freedoms.

### *Objectives*

EuroMed Rights has over the years established a strong track record for its work on human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL) respect by Israel and the Palestinian authorities in the Occupied Territory and it strengthened advocacy work done by Israeli, Palestinian, and European human rights civil society groups vis-à-vis the EU institutions and member states. As such, EuroMed Rights' Working Group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians (PIP) has become a key reference points for EU human rights and IHL advocacy.

EuroMed Rights will over the next three years continue sustaining the activities of the PIP WG as a critical human rights advocacy forum on EU policies pertaining to Israel and Palestine, addressing the key issues of accountability, attacks on human rights defenders, segmentation policies, the situation of Palestinian prisoners, and of the Palestinian minority in Israel.

## 2.7 Turkey

### *Context*

Human rights in Turkey are formally protected by the adherence of the country to a range of international human rights convention (that according to the Constitution takes precedence over national law) and Turkey's adherence to the European Convention on Human Rights that places it under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.

However, despite visible results obtained in a number of fields in the past decade, human rights protection in Turkey has serious gaps. Since the 1990s violations of freedom of expression, association and assembly, as well as political violence and armed conflict have been rife in Turkey. Since the failed coup attempt in July 2016, attacks against HRDs have widely intensified. Purges of civil servants and university teachers also hit many human rights defenders. Thousands have been imprisoned or remain behind bars awaiting trial; others have been victims of judicial harassment or have been banned from travelling abroad. Human rights defenders are not the only victims of this wide range of arbitrary practices. Continuous violations of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly as well as of fair trial standards are having devastating effects on civil society space at large.

## *Objectives*

During the next three years EuroMed Rights will significantly step-up activities in the light of the worsened situation. Its main efforts will concentrate on trial monitoring activities of courts cases related to attacks on human rights defenders and violations of their right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in coordination with its members, the Human Rights Association (IHD) and the Citizens' Assembly. This work will also address judicial independence, and the judiciary's adherence to human rights.

## **PART 3: WORKING METHODS AND ORGANISATION**

To implement the above described actions, the Network has developed methodological and organisational framework, whose key items are presented in the following section. These working methods are based on past experience and external evaluation of the organisation.

### 3.1 Working methods

#### *3.1.1 Promoting Networking and capacity building through Working Groups and Solidarity Groups*

One of the key strengths and added value of EuroMed Rights is its ability to bring human rights activists from the entire Euro-Med region – the Maghreb, the Mashrek and Europe - together on a regular basis. Creating spaces for people to meet as equal partners to share experiences and ideas has proven a strong and flexible way to empower them to act and interact in diverse contexts, including in times of rapid political changes. During the years, EuroMed Rights has developed a solid track record in bringing human rights activists from member organisations and resource organisations together in thematic, regional working groups addressing issues of common concern, i.e. that both relates to the participant organisations' work at local level and to regional policy processes.

EuroMed Rights will continue to employ this methodology over the next three years.

EuroMed Rights has also established a number of Solidarity/ Action Groups and thematic groups at country level that are composed of a core of local members and partners to which are added EuroMed Rights members and partners outside the country of concern.

These Solidarity/ Action Groups and thematic groups at country level will continue to be core sites for the delivery of the Network's policies and initiatives. The EuroMed Rights will over the next three years aim at providing them groups with resources enabling them to network, receive trainings, monitor specific human rights situations through research and reporting, to conduct advocacy through missions and joint activities, including solidarity actions

It will also provide them with support to incorporate gender equality perspectives in their work.

The different EuroMed Rights groups will be sites for capacity building of members and partners through mutual learning processes, targeted trainings, access to colleagues in the region, etc.

### 3.1.2 Advocacy

The outcome of EuroMed Rights networking and capacity building will be fed into its advocacy work.

EuroMed Rights has gained a strong track record of bringing policies developed by its members, working groups and solidarity groups into intergovernmental and governmental forums. It has a good and solid presence in Brussels where it is recognised as a key and credible civil society partner by the EU institutions.

EuroMed Rights also broadened its scope of advocacy by increasingly organising missions to EU member states, while upgrading activities in Geneva when this could bring added value to members' work. Regarding the UN, its application for EcoSoc status is still waiting for approval by the UN NGO Committee.

EuroMed Rights will continue seeking influence on EU Brussels centred human rights policies such as the European Neighbourhood Policy and be present in important Brussels based forums such as the Annual South Mediterranean Civil Forum (where the Network has the organisational lead) and the Annual Human Rights Forum. It will pro-actively facilitate access of its members to the EU human rights instruments and mechanisms through trainings, missions, briefs, etc.

However, EuroMed Rights believes that impactful foreign policy initiatives will increasingly stem from the EU member states at the expense of the European External Action Service. Hence, the Network will continue stepping-up advocacy initiatives at European capital level. It will also continue using UN human rights mechanisms where these have added value.

Finally, EuroMed Rights has gained increased experience of doing systematic advocacy at national level in the South Mediterranean, mainly through its work in Tunisia, where the Network obtained significant results for example by coordinating the tripartite dialogue between civil society, the EU and the Tunisian government. EuroMed Rights wishes to build on these experiences in other South countries where channels of communication between governmental authorities and civil society are sufficiently open, in the first place in Morocco.

However, advocacy dynamics at national level, i.e. on *internal* affairs, are different from advocacy dynamics addressing *foreign* affairs at EU, EU member state and UN level, for example in terms of sequencing initiatives, in ways of alliance building, etc. To further strengthen national level advocacy and links between EU and SMC initiatives EuroMed Rights will develop reflections on strategic choices for national advocacy.

### 3.1.3 Information and Communication

EuroMed Rights work is systematically based on its monitoring of the human rights situation in the region mainly stemming from members' information. In fact, one of the strengths of the Network is its closeness to the realities on the ground through its members. This information is fed into advocacy and communication.

EuroMed Rights is not conceived as a 'breaking news' organisation (the latter is the remit of the members), but more as a resource organisation for the media. Furthermore, EuroMed Rights seeks to influence decision makers and civil society rather than the public at large, while it also uses communication tools to highlight the situation of its members, in particular when they are at risk. However, media – print, television, radio and social media – are important ways to get messages across to the decision makers and CSOs.

EuroMed Rights will under its more media friendly name (replacing longer 'Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network') and branding, continue to publish regular news letters, issue alerts, press releases and statements, briefs and reports and further refine its outreach to well defined target groups.

It will strengthen the integration of communication in the early planning of EuroMed Rights program and advocacy activities making it an integral part of it. It will further develop its web site and social media use in order to increase the important number of visitors on its home page, and on social media such as Facebook and Twitter, including a specific Facebook page dedicated to activities in Tunisia.

While continuing implementing day-to-day communication activities, EuroMed Rights will take further steps to pro-actively attract the attention of key media to its work and support the trend that EuroMed Rights representatives are increasingly interviewed or quoted in the media. EuroMed Rights will also increase the use of social media as they have proven to be a major source of information in the South, including for young generations.

#### *3.1.4 Partnerships and members*

Cooperation, coordination and partnerships with other organisations is part and parcel of the EuroMed Rights' work approach and ethic. Over the next three years EuroMed Rights will continue to systematically engage with partners at all levels seeking alliances with - and outreach to – international non-governmental organisations, environmental and development groups, social forums, political and religious groups where relevant. In addition, it will continue to conduct formal and informal consultations with its associate members, international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, FIDH and the OMCT.

It will also pursue its close cooperation with the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Support of Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) that was established by EuroMed Rights in 2004.

At each General Assembly, new members are welcomed by the Network while others leave the organisation for various reasons. In this way, EuroMed Rights has managed over the years to renew its membership. At the same time, many member organisations had a welcome renewal and rejuvenation of its membership since 2011. As such, EuroMed Rights maintains its position as a membership organisation of key civil society actors in the region.

It is crucial for EuroMed Rights' sustainability and impact that it can ensure renewal of the membership, recruit new members and link up to new social movements that emerged in particular after 2011 to ensure that EuroMed Rights also in the future maintains its significance.

In 2015 the General Assembly adopted amendments to the EuroMed Rights' Statutes requesting the Executive Committee to submit a special report on membership that will stimulate debate about the membership of EuroMed Rights. To ensure

more flexibility regarding the 'turn-over' of members, the Executive Committee will propose that a committee is established tasked with dealing with decisions of dismissal of members upon referral of the Executive Committee.

### *3.1.5 Gender mainstreaming*

The commitment of EuroMed Rights to the promotion of gender equality and to the principles of gender balance and equal opportunities in its decision-making structures is inscribed in the Networks' statutes and bylaws.

Gender mainstreaming is a main area of concern, method and action of EuroMed Rights in order to promote gender equality and non-discrimination. It facilitates cross-cutting approaches to gender and intersectionality within the Network.

On this basis, EuroMed Rights will through gender mainstreaming continue to actively contribute to the strengthening of gender equality within the Network at all organisational levels, at the level of its programs, working groups and solidarity groups.

Over the next three years, EuroMed Rights will continue work along this track consolidating a GFP sub-committee composed of all GFPs to meet yearly, and establishing of mentor/mentee ships between resource persons the individual GFPs aimed at providing the latter with continuous support.

Over the next three years, EuroMed Rights will also support member organisations in addressing gender equality in the EuroMed Region and promote gender mainstreaming within its own activities.

### *3.1.6 Monitoring and Evaluation*

EuroMed Rights Secretariat is currently engaged in a systematic work to develop a theory of change (TOC) and result based management system adapted to EuroMed Rights, setting-up outcome objectives, result indicators, means of verification of these as well as linking internal management monitoring and evaluation to result frameworks of donors.

EuroMed Rights will consolidate the TOC approach work over the next three years making use of strategic planning tools as an integral part of its daily functioning and hence upgrade the monitoring and evaluation of the results it achieves. In this regard, it is carefully studying the recommendations of an external evaluation that was finalised by SIDA in 2017 suggesting a strengthening of EuroMed Rights strategic planning tools.

The Network will also develop the monitoring and evaluation of its gender responsiveness, by including and working with gender specific indicators for the above-mentioned evaluation tools. These initiatives will allow it to better assess best practices and challenges to its work, and improve result reporting to donors.

In general, the results/ achievements of EuroMed Rights activities will consider the following elements:

- The extent to which the EuroMed Rights enabled its members and partners to meet, network, strategize and conduct joint actions, including monitoring, documentation, solidarity and advocacy on human rights standards and violations.

- The extent to which EuroMed Rights members benefitted in their daily activities from engaging in EuroMed Rights networking activities
- The extent to which EuroMed Rights capacity building activities facilitated the members and partners work
- The extent to which EuroMed Rights monitoring, documentation and communication work has been conducive to protecting members or partners at risk or under attack
- The extent to which EuroMed Rights advocacy and communication work reached and was taken into account by civil society and decision makers in the region

## 3.2 Organisational issues

### *3.2.1 The Executive Committee and the Secretariat*

EuroMed Rights is a complex organisation working in three languages with a membership spread over 30 countries; an Executive Committee (EC), half from the North and half from the South, covering 12 countries; a large number of working groups bringing hundreds of activists together on a regular basis on regional themes and national issues; and a multi-national secretariat based in four countries.

The Network has managed to strike a balance of power between members, working group participants, governance bodies, management and staff, and between regional and country level. This has been a key to its success and sustainability. EuroMed Rights will continue along this path ensuring necessary adjustments when needed to maintain these balances.

EuroMed Rights will continue to ensure that the EC is provided with the necessary resources to conduct its work including meeting three times a year as stipulated by the Statutes.

The EC is elected by the members to implement the decisions of the General Assembly, including overseeing the work of the Secretariat, and to conduct EuroMed Rights actions between Assembly meetings. This implies that it is mandated to take public stands on events and political developments that may fall outside some members' remit or that would not necessarily meet consensus by all members.

The EuroMed Rights Secretariat has in the past years gone through a significant restructuring process. EuroMed Rights is pleased that an independent KPMG system evaluation in 2017 confirmed the sound functioning of the Secretariat.

Also, the process of adapting the Secretariat to changing circumstances will continue over the next three years enabling it to deliver the Strategy and Work Programme of the Network in an effective and cost-efficient way. This implies that it will close the Paris office while the office in Tunis office will over the next three years further develop as a sub-regional office for the Maghreb countries.

### *3.2.2 Funding*

EuroMed Rights has during the past three years conducted fund raising activities according to a strategy adopted by the EC in 2013. On this basis, the Network succeeded in diversifying funding sources and increasing the number of donors that provide core funds. However, its equity remains disproportionately low compared to the size of the organisation.

EuroMed Rights will develop a new funding strategy for the next three years engaging in dialogue with relevant donors on the overall balance between the different levels of the Network's activities, including between regional and national work. The strategy will build on the following criteria:

- *Ensuring EuroMed Rights' independence:* The Network will accept funds from public and private donors when they sustain activities that fall within the Network's remit, strategy plan and work programme, and only insofar as its right to freely express its opinions and policies is respected and not compromised by political conditions
- *Minimise EuroMed Rights' dependence of single donors:* The organisation aims at being in a financial position where one donor does not fund more than one third of the total activities
- *Seeking avenues to strengthen its equity and develop reserve funds,* when accepted by the donors, that can amongst other be used in organisational adjustment periods

## Glossary

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoE	Council of Europe
COI	Commission of Inquiry
CSO	Civil society organisations
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
EC	Executive Committee
EcoSoc	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EEAS	European External Action Service
EMHRF	Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EU	European Union
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GFP	Gender Focal Point
HRD	Human rights defender
IHL	International humanitarian law
IIIM	Independent Investigation Mechanism
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEMMA	An EU-funded project to support Tunisian institutions on migration and mobility issues
MAWG	EuroMed Rights working group on Migrant, Asylum seekers and Refugee Rights
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OMCT	World Organisation Against Torture
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
SAG	Syrian action group
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMC	Countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean
TOC	Theory of Change
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VaW	Violence against Women
WG	Working group