



EuroMed Rights
EuroMed Droits
الأورو-متوسطية لحقوق

EuroMed Rights Executive Committee Meeting Copenhagen, 4-6 October 2018 *Minutes*

The meeting of the Executive Committee was preceded by a meeting of the Troika, Søs Nissen and Marc Schade-Poulsen, on Thursday 4 October with the director of the MENA Department at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On the evening of Friday 5 October, a dinner was held, which allowed for the new Executive Committee to meet local partners, academics and donors, to discuss the human rights situation in the Euro-Mediterranean region and to receive an update from Denmark.

PARTICIPANTS

EuroMed Rights Executive Committee:

Wadih Al-Asmar (President), Catherine Teule (Vice president), Moataz El Fegier (Treasurer), Jamila Sayouri, David Bondia, Lubna Dawany, Radostina Pavlova, Theodora Christou, Søs Nissen, Messaoud Romdhani, Sara Prestianni

Excused:

Hamdi Shaqqura

Invited: Kamel Jendoubi et Michel Tubiana, honorary presidents of EuroMed Rights

Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive director), Marit Flø Jørgensen (Programme director), Eliana Capretti (Director of communications) and Christel Décatore (Rapporteur). All Copenhagen staff was invited to attend the first session, which took place on Thursday, 4 October, at EuroMed Rights in Copenhagen. Søren Toft (Administrative, Financial and HR Director) was also present at the finance and fundraising session.

1. WELCOME, APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA, APPROVAL OF THE REPORT OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING, AND INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK OF THE NETWORK

Decision:

The minutes of the June 24th EC meeting held in Brussels just after the General Assembly were approved.

NB: the minutes of the meeting that took place from March 14 to 16 in Beirut was the subject of a remote approval (by mail) by the previous EC.

After a brief welcome by Wadih Al-Asmar and approval of the agenda, Marc Schade-Poulsen recalled the **history of EuroMed Rights**: the context of its creation after the Barcelona Declaration, the reasons for the establishment of the network's headquarter in Denmark, and the motivations that led to its singular structure, to wit:

- Its bottom-up character: anchored to its base, constituted by the member organizations,
- The spirit of equality between North and South,
- The balance between the contributions of the members, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat to the functioning of the organization.

Consequently, the **governance of the association** was brought to attention, highlighting:

- The power of the general assembly, to which the Executive Committee, but also the president, directly elected, is accountable.
- The importance of the duo formed by the executive director and the president, which, according to the statutes, are the two core functions of the organization.

Then, the **organization chart and activities of the offices** of the Secretariat were explained:

- The Secretariat has grown significantly in recent years, counting 40 employees to date (interns included). Managing the growth of the organization must remain a point of vigilance.
- The Brussels office has the most staff.
- The Tunis office does not only have the role of supporting the activities of the Tunisian members, it also leads working groups and a dialogue with the European institutions in a singular and innovative process. Producing a reference document describing this specific dynamic would be useful in encouraging the EU to duplicate this model in other countries.
- Suggestion: in order to better symbolize the transversal dimension of most of the activities of the network and to emphasize the non-hierarchical character of the organization, the organizational chart of the secretariat could be represented from left to right, rather than from top to bottom.

One was also reminded of **membership and membership typology**. The challenges consist of:

- The fragmentation of organisations along different themes
- Increasing professionalization of organisations to the detriment of activism
- Aging of committed individuals and the difficulty of ensuring generational renewal and transferral [of institutional knowledge].

Finally, Marit Flø Jørgensen presented an update on **the working groups** and the ongoing renewal process. Before the summer break a call for applications to participate in the various working groups was launched, defining the composition of the working groups. Of particular note is the launch of a new working group on economic and social rights, the large number of applications received (84), and the fact that only four regular members are not active in the working groups.

During the discussions, it was proposed inter alia to:

- Put on the agenda of the new EC an analysis of the functioning of the working groups, the only real locus of interaction among members between general assemblies.
- Cultivate regional interaction.
- Reflect on the appropriation of the work of the working groups by the network.

2. ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Legal obligations

The note from a lawyer presenting the legal obligations of the Executive Committee was discussed. The following points were briefly mentioned:

- Since this is an unpaid function, the risk of litigation is low.
- Members must ensure the correct application of the statutes and by-laws and in particular to be properly informed by the Secretariat.

The strong prerogatives of the Executive Director in the day-to-day management of staff and finance were emphasized.

Operation of the EC

EC members discussed how they work as a group and in particular how to prepare press releases and position papers. In addition, EC members should ensure that they consult their counterparts in an appropriate manner.

At the end of the exchanges, it was decided:

- To systematically inform all members of the EC of any draft declaration, positions taken.
- To specify for each solicitation the expectations vis-à-vis the EC: the level of urgency, the response time, whether a position is expected, by whom.
- To involve as much as possible the concerned members in the press releases: information prior to the publication or validation request, to arbitrate according to the cases.
- To carry out a self-evaluation at the end of the EC meetings.

These principles can be adjusted according to feedback from practice.

Several EC members have also alerted the Secretariat to the often poor quality of translations.

Dates of the Executive Committee meetings in 2019:

From Friday 1 to Sunday 3 March, from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 June, from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 October

3. ROUNDTABLE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE REGION

In preparation, a different framing of this item on the agenda was requested to improve the quality of the debates (proposal to invite experts).

EC members shared their concerns about the human rights situation in the region, both in the North (anti-democratic trend, alliances of populist movements, criminalization of NGOs...) and in the South (rise of Islamism, attacks against human rights defenders, demands for economic and social rights...). The concerns converged on the decline of the silent but benevolent extant support of populations for human rights values and the increasing attacks on these values emanating from the people themselves.

The members wondered how the network might address these issues in a concrete manner: development of partnerships, ECOSOC status, making use of the context of the European elections, introduction of new themes that are able to garner increased mobilization of public opinion such as environmental protection and corruption. Marc Schade-Poulsen pointed out that the elements contested by civil society, which forms the financial backbone of the network, vis-à-vis the EU, have been the same for 20 years, which constitutes a paradox that merits our attention.

4. ASSESSMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHALLENGES IN THE COMING YEARS

Assessment of the General Assembly

The results of the 2018 General Assembly are considered positive. The plenary format, which had been subject to debate, functioned well. It is always a privileged moment for members to enjoy.

The report on the seminar on the shrinking space of civil society prior to the GA was approved. The members of the EC requested a period of 15 days to review and approve the report of the GA.

Challenges of the coming years

Marc Schade-Poulsen outlined the strategy and work program that was approved by the General Assembly. In comment, EC members have:

- Emphasized the need to work on the possible separation of the topic of gender mainstreaming from that of women's rights. This item will be on the agenda of the next EC.

- Reported the interest of Syrian members to renew direct cooperation with the network.
- Requested that members' comments on the strategy be circulated again before the next meeting

5. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The roles of political referent and resource person in charge of assisting the former were divided among the members of the EC. See summary in appendix.

NB: the decision to nominate Michel Tubiana as referent for the Majalat project, with Lubna Dawany as resource person was taken after the meeting.

6. EUROMED RIGHTS MONITORING AND EVALUATION TOOLS

The evaluation conducted by Sida in 2017 highlighted EuroMed Rights' difficulties to report on and value its actions. The organization has received funding to implement various assessment tools. Marit Flø Jørgensen presented those tools that were developed with the contribution of staff and members, to be implemented from 2019:

- EuroMed Rights' **theory of change** describes the results the organization wants to achieve. It is a living document, one that is requested by most donors.
- **A database of the results** obtained for each program, fed by data collected according to the 'outcome harvesting' method, which consists of identifying the behavioural changes resulting from the actions of the network. The objective is to learn from a comparison of expected and attained results.
- **A planning/monitoring/evaluation/reporting cycle named PAMELA** will twice a year produce reports for the EC describing the actions, results and lessons learned for the future.

EC members capitalized on the database project to propose the creation of a resource centre that would consist of political or fact sheets on key topics such as migration. They also stressed the importance of maintaining one's independence and room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis the donors, who, borrowing certain tools from the business world, seek to measure the effectiveness of the organizations they finance according to established criteria. Finally, the EC deems it necessary to properly inform/train the member organizations on these tools so as not to break the relationship of trust.

7. REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented a summary of the latest activities of the network, focusing in particular on:

- The Majalat project
- Morocco: after a year, stocktaking conference foreseen for November
- Tunisia: functioning very well, particularly the Justice and Gender working groups in the tri-party dialogue with the EU, positive start of the support activity for constitutional bodies, creation of a reflection group on how to respond to European policies

Marit Flø Jørgensen then returned to the process of setting up new working groups on migration, women's rights, PIP, economic and social rights.

Conclusions of the exchanges

Approval of the report of the Secretariat

Majalat: the EC asks to be consulted in the future regarding the participant lists of the meetings.

Working groups: after debate, the members of the EC asked for the composition of the groups to be sent to them by email for approval before distributing them to the members. They stressed the importance of correctly justifying the few refusals that will follow. Finally, it was proposed to amend the out-of-statute rules on the functioning of working groups to provide for the exclusion of members absent more than 3 times at group meetings.

8. FINANCE

Søren Toft presented the state of expenditure of the 2018 budget and a projected 2019 budget. We recall in short:

- The positive outlook for the end of the 2018 budget: expecting a slight surplus.
- The 2019 budget 90% secured
- 4 points of concern to the CE:

- The closure of the Paris office in 2019 will generate costs (provisions).
- Transfer error on an account
- Expenses for the recruitment of the new Executive Director
- A policy on exchange rate security is being prepared and will be submitted to the EC for approval at a future meeting.

Marc Schade-Poulsen then gave an overview of all the donors and informed the EC about future funding opportunities for each. The financial sustainability of EuroMed Rights is ensured by medium-term secured financing by key donors. Marc Schade-Poulsen, however, drew the attention of the EC to a weakness of the organization, namely the very low level of its reserve funds, and the urgency of remedying the situation.

Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen presented two budget reduction scenarios for 2019, compared to the estimated budget presented to the General Assembly, in anticipation of not obtaining certain financing.

EC decision

Approval of submitted financial reports. After voting, the EC decided to prioritize the launch of the Working Group on Economic and Social Rights, in line with the expectations of the GA.

9. QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO STAFF

A closed session, without the presence of staff members, was dedicated to the **new common staff rules** due to enter into force in 2019.

The Executive Committee approved the rules, highlighting the positive spirit with which it welcomes the election of staff representatives in the three main offices of the secretariat.

The second topic dealt with the **recruitment of a new Executive Director**:

After more than 20 years in office, Marc Schade-Poulsen has decided to leave the position of Executive Director of EuroMed Rights to pursue other professional goals toward the end of his career. The EC discussed the process to be followed to recruit a replacement and allow for the most efficient handover (recruitment target by the end of 2018, to be taken up by spring 2019 at the latest). This recruitment may, depending on the chosen profile, have an impact on the organization of the secretariat. This aspect will be dealt with later.

Each EC member then spoke about the characteristics of the sought-after profile: the post will be Copenhagen-based. The incumbent will have to master at least 2 working languages of the network and will have both political/strategic and managerial/operational competencies.

Of the exchanges, we recall:

- The creation of a selection committee. The latter will be in charge of the candidate interviews and will report to the whole of the EC.
- The implication of management but not with the interviews and the final choice in order not to weaken future working relations.
- The writing of a job description by Marc Schade-Poulsen to propose to the EC.
- Further reflection on the contractual aspect: not necessarily a contract of indefinite duration.
- Maintaining a link to Marc Schade-Poulsen, as advisor, after his formal departure from the organization.
- Information from members and donors prior to publication of the offer, indicating that Marc will fully assume his duties until his departure.

10. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Eliana Capretti presented a new communication strategy to the EC for approval.

This strategy, baptized MEDITERRANEA, breaks with previous practices by focusing on social networks. One of the strategic objectives is to create a virtual Euro-Mediterranean community – a space not yet occupied in social networks - relying on members.

The new strategy also displays the necessary dovetailing of communication and advocacy efforts to achieve our goals.

A procedure for validating press releases was also presented and discussed. EC members raised the issue of validations of joint statements with other organizations. It was reiterated that the Tunis office should follow the same approval procedure as other offices.

The new communication strategy is approved - with an addition on the procedure for joint declarations.

11. FUNDRAISING

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented a reflection note prior to defining a new fundraising strategy. In addition to an analysis of current practices, the document suggests the development of new initiatives to develop the organization's income, in particular to secure its reserve funds: raise funds via our website or by organizing events, develop intellectual services and consulting activities.

The following tracks were discussed by the EC:

- The EC's search for private donations.
- Organize events, but consistent with the values of EuroMed Rights.
- Negotiate with donors that part of program funding is dedicated to regional coordination.
- Lobby the European Parliament to try to obtain funding.

The EC has decided to earmark the revenue from membership fees and dedicate them to replenishing its own funds

**EUROMED RIGHTS POLITICAL REFERENTS
2018 -2021**

Area of work	Political referent	Resource Person
Statuary officers		
President	Wadih Al-Asmar	
Vice President	Catherine Teule	
Treasurer	Moataz El Fegiery	
Gender equality/ gender mainstreaming	To be decided	
Themes		
Shrinking Space	Lubna Dawany	All EC members
Majalat	Michel Tubiana	Lubna Dawany
Gender equality, Women's rights	Jamila Sayouri	Lubna Dawany
Gender mainstreaming	Temporarily: Jamila Sayouri /Theodora Christou	
Migrant and refugee rights	Radostina Pavlova	Sara Prestianni / Catherine Teule
Economic and social rights	Messaoud Romdhani	David Bondia
Discrimination	David Bondia	Catherine Teule / Messaoud Romdhani
Justice	Theodora Christou	Jamila Sayouri
Trial monitoring	Theodora Christou	Radostina Pavlova
Palestine, Israel and Palestinians (PIP)	Hamdi Shaqqura	Søs Nissen

Countries specifically mentioned in strategy		
Europe (including membership issues) / Promote Network in Europe	Catherine Teule	Radostina Pavlova / David Bondia
Syria, Syrie	Wadiah Al-Asmar	Theodora Christou
Palestine / Israel	Hamdi Shaqqura	Søs Nissen
Egypt	Moataz El Fegjery	Theodora Christou
Tunisia	Messaoud Romdhani	Moataz El Fegjery
Algeria	Jamila Sayouri / Messaoud Romdhani	David Bondia
Morocco	Jamila Sayouri	David Bondia
Other countries		
Jordan	Lubna Dawany	
Lebanon	Wadiah Al-Asmar	
Libya	Moataz El Fegjery	Sara Prestianni / Theodora Christou
Cyprus	Theodora Christou	
Malta	Sara Prestianni	
Portugal	David Bondia	
Italy	Sara Prestianni	
Spain	David Bondia	
Greece	Radostina Pavlova	Theodora Christou
France	Catherine Teule	
Germany	Søs Nissen	
UK	Theodora Christou	
Belgium	Catherine Teule	
Denmark	Søs Nissen	
Bulgaria	Radostina Pavlova	
Central Europe, Balkans	Radostina Pavlova	
Turkey	Radostina Pavlova	

Ireland	Moataz El Fegjery	
Functions		
Communication	Wadih Al-Asmar	
Advocacy	Sara Prestianni	
Monitoring and Evaluation	Søs Nissen	