

“Human Rights – More than ever!”

13th GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EUROMED RIGHTS
& 7th Consultation of EMHRF Council of Representatives

12 - 14 October 2024

REPORT

The 13th General Assembly of EuroMed Rights and the event “*Human Rights – More than ever!*” are organised with the generous financial support of:



Network of
European
Foundations



 Dansk-Arabisk
Partnerskabsprogram




 HEINRICH
BÖLL
STIFTUNG



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

 Sida
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

SUMMARY

Vestergade 14-16, 2nd floor,
1456 Copenhagen K, Denmark

tel +45 32 64 17 00
mail information@euromedrights.net

Introduction

I- Opening of the General Assembly

II- A Look at the past

III- Looking forward

IV-Taking a Stand



INTRODUCTION

On 13-14 October 2024, EuroMed Rights held its 13th General Assembly, gathering members and partners in person, after the 12th GA had to be held online due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. We also revived the format of having a seminar, held the day before the General Assembly. The GA was held in Rome, enabling participants to benefit from the Sabir festival, organised annually by our Italian member, Arci, bringing together people from around the Mediterranean. This year we organised our seminar in the framework of the Festival. The seminar was divided into two sessions: The first on **'Justice and Accountability in and for Palestine: How Israel's genocidal war in Gaza affects human rights politics in the Euro-Mediterranean region'**¹, while the second one dealt with **'The impact on human rights standards of recent changes in EU's partnerships policies in the Mediterranean region'**²

The General Assembly brought together our not regular, associate and honorary members as well as partners and donor. It also allowed EuroMed Rights members, constituting the Council of Representatives of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF) to be presented with an overview of EMHRFs excellent work and plans for the future.

This report provides a summary of the presentations and debates that took place during the GA. The first day was dedicated to 'looking back' at the last three years since the last General Assembly, while the second day looked ahead, presenting the Revised Strategy 2022-2027. The GA also saw the election of a new executive committee and president.

I- Opening of the General Assembly

This first part consisted of ensuring that the General Assembly proceed in line with the statutes. The quorum was established with 42 members present out of 65.

Wadih Al-Asmar, president of EuroMed Rights, opened the session by giving an overview and analysis of the Human Rights situation in the MENA region³. While the situation in MENA region is worrying, and very alarming in both Tunisia and Egypt, Europe is facing a time where all fundamental and basic values are under attack specifically the right to protest. Any expression of solidarity with Palestinian people is being punished and repressed. There is a lot to fear about democratic principles and human rights even in the west where Media outlets are controlled by the private sector, and where anti-democratic and anti-freedom ideas are disseminated. In such regional context, the president highlighted that our challenge as a human right movement is to continue to highlight the need for upholding human rights principles and commitments.

The quorum was reconfirmed, and it was explained that members recommended by the EC to have their membership of EMR approved by the GA, can vote once their membership has been approved. The

¹ For a resume of the first session, kindly see Annex 1.

² See annex 1 for a summary of the proceedings of the seminar and the program.

³



Steering Committee of the General Assembly was presented and two vote assessors Issa Rahmoun and Giorgio Caracciolo were appointed with no objections.

Finally, the voting process and procedures were explained with the three colour cards (red, yellow green) distributed to the members allowed to vote, including those being appointed proxys for others.

The agenda of the GA was then presented and unanimously approved.

II- A Look at the past

1. Political and activity reporting

Wadih Al-Asmar, president of EuroMed Rights, and Rasmus A. Boserup, executive director, took the floor in turns to take stock of the past period, presenting the political report and the activity report of 2022-2024⁴.

1.a Political report 2022-2024

Wadih Al Asmar gave a passionate speech addressing the ongoing human rights challenges in the Mediterranean region and the broader context of conflicts, particularly focusing on the situation in Gaza and Lebanon, the perceived failures of the European Union to react proportionately to these, and the need for accountability and action against human rights violations.

He recalled that the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 laid the foundations for promoting human rights and cooperation in the Mediterranean region with a call for the Mediterranean to be a space for dialogue rather than conflict. He reflected on the last years challenges, including the pandemic and the weakening of the EU's commitment to individual freedoms, which are significant challenges to human rights advocacy. To face this bleak outlook, he stressed the need to continue to call for accountability in this context of double standards, particularly in the context of EU countries and authoritarian regimes in North Africa. With a note of hope and resilience, Wadih al Asmar added that despite the bitterness of the current situation, there is a note of hope for the future, with a belief that the rising number of critics against human rights violations signals a potential for positive change.

He concluded his intervention by calling for a strategic outlook and reevaluating working methods and strategies for the next phase of human rights advocacy over the coming years.

1.b Activity report 2022-2024

Rasmus A. Boserup, Executive Director of EuroMed Rights, then took the floor to present a summary of the network's activities over the past three years.

He first outlined the political developments impacting our work, such as: the growing authoritarianism in MENA that has had a clear impact on shrinking spaces of civil society work; the genocide in Gaza that

⁴ The full reports were distributed to participants ahead of the GA. If you are interested in receiving these reports, contact the EMR Secretariat.



deeply affected our work and led to a diminished trust in the human rights systems; the normalization of extreme rights politics in Europe which decreased the will to accommodate asks of HRDs; and finally the European security environment that has changed towards Russia with funders shifting priorities from South to East.

Then he pointed out overall successes as: Our strategic framework is tuned in on most relevant issues.

- We are highly adaptable – changing operations when situations change
- We have further expanded our collaboration with HROs and CSOs in the region.
- Our impact and influence on decision makers has increased
- Our media coverage is stable.
- We have made significant advances on gender mainstreaming.
- Our credibility is high because we succeed in mobilizing our members.

The learnings we learned in this period in relation to how to manage as a network of human rights defenders is to broaden our base, to combine strategic resolve with operational adaptability and to equate our credibility with that of our members.

He then recalled the 10 goals of our strategy, the five political goals, and the five organizational goals, and briefly outlined the main achievements within each, as follows:

1. We succeeded in heavily impacting EU initiatives, and we saw improvement in our visibility in relation to our goal on reinforced migration and asylum rights.
2. Several initiatives were undertaken to work against femicide and cooperation with local partners and to work heavily on gender mainstreaming as well to enhance gender equality, our second goal of the strategy.
3. In relation to increased accountability, justice and space for civil society, we enhanced our advocacy driven by the working groups, and we were able to highlight the genocide in Gaza, while cross program initiatives were reinforced.
4. In relation to strengthened democracy and freedoms, we focused intensely on monitoring and reacting to the deteriorating human rights and political situation in Tunisia.
5. Over the past three years, we went from an initial focus on social movements to looking at the broader IMF structure and financial institutions. Furthermore, many of our other programs integrate economic and social rights aspects.

He also highlighted some of the progress on our organizational goals of membership, visibility, carbon footprint, and financial sustainability.

He then showed an assessment of progress made towards the strategy, that indicated that we are well on track on our strategy, obviously with some differences between the goals, despite the external factors which affected our work.

He ended with some take away for the next strategic phase, namely:

- Face off hard time by broadening the base (members, partners, regions)
- Combine strategic steadfastness (goals) with operational adaptability (activities)
- Build further on our competitive advantage: Representing the frontline of the HR movement in euro-med region
- Build further on mainstreaming successes (from gender and beyond)
- Ensure razor sharp strategic concepts (distinct political goals)



- Build on impact success (advocacy) to strengthen visibility
- Refine budget composition to further enhance accountability and strategic management

2.FINANCIAL REPORTING

2.1 Financial report 2022-2024

During the session Moataz El Feghery, Treasurer, with the assistance of Bjarke Kronborg, Finance Director, presented the financial report 2022-2024.

They presented a summary of income and expenditure 2021-23, highlighting developments and changes in the finance/HR/Admin function and proposed an auditor appointment. The three main documents for reference for this session were: Financial Reporting 3.1, Financial Reporting 3.2, and Auditor Reporting 3.3⁵

The treasurer started by recalling that the financial exercise is also a political exercise to manage the changing situation in the region. The budget overview of 2022-2024 has met the overall goal approved by previous GA in 2021, in fact it partially exceeded it.

There were four main financial phases of the Network's budget:

- First phase 2010-2016
- Fluctuation 2016-2020
- Pandemic impact 2020-2021
- Recovery and stability 2022-2024

He showed the total operating income since 2019, cost share per program, long term development since 2010-2024, development of income 2018-2024, the list of donors and their share, the development of reserve funds 2012-2023, and the staff distribution.

The approved budget has increased steadily over time, as actual spending reflected the approved budget.

Concerning the general operating income, we see a balance between regional and country spendings. Tunisia and Egypt received the largest share of funding of the country programmes. For the regional programs, dialogue projects received the largest share of funding (through Majalat especially) and then the other regional WGs. We have some balance between core funding and project funding, even if it is becoming increasingly hard to receive core funding. Concerning main donors, in order of largest allocations, they are: SIDA, Danish MFA, Swiss Government, Norwegian MFA, EU, OSF.

At the same time, we were also able develop reserve funds, and there was an increase especially since 2019. However, there was an important decrease in 2023, due to post-pandemic effects as well as other external factors like currency devaluation and others.

Concerning the main developments in the finance unit, there is a transition from core to project-based economy; continuing anti-money laundering efforts and restricting access to cash; procurement tightening

⁵ These documents were among the documents sent to the participants prior to the GA. If you are interested in receiving these documents, kindly contact the EMR secretariat.



to ensure efficient use and compliance; changes in Danish booking legislation which require a new accounting system in 2025; and time registration system has been implemented.

2.2 Auditor Appointment

The General Assembly should also appoint an external auditor. The Secretariat suggested re-appointing the agency BDO which has worked for us 3 years already (it was explained that we aim at changing every 5 years).

Discussion on the reports:

The President, the Finance director and the Treasurer took the floor to answer the different questions. Most questions were about additional information and about visibility. In relation to questions on my information on the work of the working groups and solidarity groups, it was suggested to consult the annual report, which contains more details than the 3-year report. On questions on the difference on spending between countries, and especially on Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinian refugees, it was underlined that it would depend on the scope and added value of our work, as well as the context and our ability to find funding. It was also explained that the Network has worked on all topics and that we via the regional working groups cover all countries. Then there are specific projects, like the project on Algeria, but admittedly, some countries have more funding than others, and sometimes there are hard choices that need to be made, and a lesson learned is, that if members pro-actively engage in assisting in finding funds, and we work in consortia with our members, opportunities increase. In relation to the Kurdish question, it was said that we do cover trials against Kurdish activists within our project in Turkey and that we need time to develop work in Syria. It was also stressed that Ukraine is outside the geographical mandate of EuroMed Rights.

Regarding the selection of the BDO auditor, it was explained that it was made with the EMHRF because of efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

3. MEMBERSHIP REPORTING AND GENDER AUDIT

3.1 Membership report

Giorgio Caracciolo, Executive Committee member presented the membership report⁶. He stressed that members are living under harsh conditions and paying a high price for their work. While it has been difficult for our colleagues in Egypt, it has hit our colleagues in Gaza, Palestine, Israel and also in Tunisia. Many are labelled as terrorist and anti-terrorism laws used to target HRDs.

He then went through the four parts of the membership report: 1. New memberships, expulsions, resignations and exclusions since 2021; 2. EuroMed Rights membership overview in 2024; 3. Findings from the membership survey 2022; and 4. Directives for 2024-2027.

⁶ The membership report was presented in a PP presentation. It had been shared with GA ahead of the GA.



In relation to the membership application, the following members were recommended for approval by the GA, and presented themselves for 3 minutes each⁷. They were:

Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) as national member

IRIDIA – Center for defense of human rights as national member(Spain)

MARSAD – The Arab Centre for Human Rights in the Golan as national member (Syria)

NOVACT – as regional member

Gulf Center for Human Rights – as associate member.

Three members withdrew from EuroMed Rights, namely:

AMERA - as regional member

SIGI/J (Sisterhood is Global/J) – as national member

DCHRS (Damascus Centre for Human Rights Studies) – as national member.

In relation to the membership overview, EuroMed Rights would have a total of 95 member, with 69 regular members (including national and regional members), 8 associate members and 18 honorary members (should the new members be approved by the GA).

In relation to the findings from the membership survey, it was confirmed that EuroMed Rights members are generally aligned with EuroMed Rights' five goals, with several organizations working on thematic issues linked to migration, gender, accountability, democracy and social and economic rights.

Members' priorities on the new issues seem relatively aligned with the number of member organisations working on these issues.

The recommendations included: **Aiming at a 50/50 balance between the global south and Europe** where most of the expansion in European membership would come from strategically identifying members in countries where we need allies for our advocacy work and where we currently do not have members (such as Germany and the Netherlands) and otherwise from new members in Central and Eastern Europe. **Strengthening our membership in Mashrek** in line with the geopolitical goal in our strategy, including revisiting our current membership and identifying new strong potential members in some countries of the Mashrek; **Prioritising to identify members in countries where we do not currently have members** (such as Germany, Netherlands, Libya, Malta). **Trying to expand the number of partners** we work with in key strategic countries in relation to our programmatic work. This would mean that we would aim at having members in each country rather than prioritise the size/number of inhabitants per country.

Following the membership report presentation, the new members recommended for approval by the GA, presented themselves for 3 minutes each⁸. They were:

Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) as national member

IRIDIA – Center for defense of human rights as national member(Spain)

MARSAD – The Arab Centre for Human Rights in the Golan as national member (Syria)

NOVACT – as regional member

Gulf Center for Human Rights – as associate member.

⁷ In addition to the oral presentation made at the GA, a presentation of the organization had been shared with the GA participants ahead of the GA.

⁸ In addition to the oral presentation made at the GA, a presentation of the organization had been shared with the GA participants ahead of the GA.



3.2 Gender audit report

Lubna Dawani, Gender political referent of EuroMed Rights, presented the Gender Audit report⁹. The presentation started by preliminary outputs from the gender audit to illustrate tangible advancements in inter alia creating a more inclusive and respectful workplace, showcasing a commitment to diversity and equity. It then reviewed the challenges which highlight significant barriers to effective gender mainstreaming (GM) within the Network to finish with the list of needed actions on political, organisational and programmatic level to achieve the strategical goal and becoming a leading gender equality organisation in the region.

The achievements included: 1-) Good results since the last audit, such as GM Roadmap 2022-2024, Respectful Workplace Policy (RWP), Inclusive language manual and glossary, Gender analysis at project and working group level, Training on gender analysis, inclusive language, etc.); 2) Strong leadership on gender mainstreaming 3) Good understanding of gender mainstreaming and its importance at Secretariat, EC and GFP level. 4) Allocation of a budget (1%) for gender mainstreaming activities. 5) More favourable environment at Secretariat and network level thanks to young staff and representatives of member organisations.

The challenges included: 1) More work to make the Secretariat aware of the implementation of the GM in their daily work; 2) Systematic budget allocation for human resources and activities; 3) More activities/initiatives to mainstream gender in network exchanges (LGBTIQ+ rights, different considerations around gender and women's rights, etc.); 4) Greater clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors dealing with GM at organisational, policy and programme level; 5) Workload of Gender Focal points reduces their effectiveness; 6) Lack of evidence-based system demonstrating progress and gaps in GM (gender-disaggregated data).

The overall recommendations focus on the following 1. **Promote Gender at All Levels:** Actively integrate GM into all organisational activities, revising training materials, policies, and technical documents with a gender perspective. 2. **Strengthen Accountability Mechanisms:** Implement a systematic accountability mechanism for GM, including gender equality markers (GEM) and program-level gender indicators to track progress and resource allocation. 3. **Enhance Training and Capacity Building:** Provide targeted GM training tailored to different roles within the organisation. Develop a mentorship program and use online platforms for flexible training options. 4. **Improve Data Collection Systems:** Establish robust systems for collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data, incorporating an intersectional lens to capture diverse experiences. 5. **Foster Collaboration and Communication:** Enhance communication and collaboration between the GM coordinator, program coordinators, and other relevant units to ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the GM Roadmap.

Discussion

A detailed discussion on gender and women's rights, highlighting various aspects and concerns within the context of gender audits, the LGTBIQ task force, and the need for a more focused approach to women's rights and gender equality. The key points discussed were mainly about the regular Gender Audits and their scope (including impact indicators) and the establishment of a task force for LGTBIQ issues. A suggestion for revising the gender audit to allocate more resources to gender equality issues, using the latest World Economic Forum gender gap report as a reference was made. It was also suggested to involve

⁹ The Gender Audit report is available on our website, see XXX



members more in the development of the Roadmap for gender mainstreaming, as there is a lot of expertise in the member organisations. In relation to the LGTBIQ task force, there were reflections on whether this should be separated from the Women's Rights and Gender Justice working group or not.

The need for support to women human rights defenders (WHRDs) in exile were stressed as well as the need to challenge patriarchal attitudes. Lubna explained that gender focal points were appointed in each working group to assist the group in gender mainstreaming and stressed the importance of cooperation between the political referent for the women's rights and gender justice program and the gender mainstreaming. She also stressed the need for building a new gender mainstreaming strategy built on the recommendations of the gender audit.

Overall, the discussion reflected a collective recognition of the complexities surrounding gender rights, the importance of intersectionality, and the need for strategic collaboration and resource allocation to effectively address these issues.

4 Approval of the reports

Vote on the new members: All accepted without unanimously (45 for, no one abstained, no one against)

Vote on the membership report: unanimously adopted (40 votes)

Vote on the political report: 1 abstained, no one against.

Vote on the Activity report: unanimously adopted.

Vote on the financial report: unanimously adopted.

Vote on the BDO: 2 abstentions, and no one against

5. Presidential and executive committee elections

Wadih al Asmar opened the electoral session stating that the objective was to vote for the new EC and President. Lilia Rebai explained the process of voting and the rules for the composition of the EC: equal representation from the North and the South, i.e. from Europe and the MENA, as well as from the Mashrek and the Maghreb) and gender balance. Furthermore, there cannot be more than one representative from one country. She also recalled that the representative must represent an organisation.

She explained that there were 14 candidates for the EC, and that the GA participants with the right to vote, should choose 5 candidates from the south and 6 candidates of the 7 candidates from the north.

There were two candidates for the presidency: Lubna Dawani from Al-Mizan for Law, Jordan, and Monia ben Jemia from the Tunisia Democratic Women Association (ATFD), Tunisia. Candidates presented shortly themselves.

A clarification re the geografic mandate was made. It encompasses the countries who signed up to the Barcelona Declaration. However, after the UK left the EU in 2018, it was decided to keep the UK as part of EuroMed Rights mandate. For the southern countries, it is still the countries that were part of the Barcelona Declaration.

Thanking the outgoing president



Kamel Jendoubi, Honorary President, gave a speech to thank the outgoing president of EuroMed Rights, Wadih Al Asmar. He mentioned that Wadih has been a companion in the struggle for human rights, but he has been much more, making a link between a generation of HRDs in the Arab region coming to meet a new generation. This created a friendship based on values, principles and unwavering engagement for human rights. EuroMed Rights will continue to uphold these rights, and now Wadih will pass the flame to his successor.

ELECTIONS FIRST ROUND OF VOTING

The voting office was opened on 13 October 13, 2024 from 6 to 7:15 p.m. It was announced that the 35 ordinary members had the right to vote, and one of these members has a proxy voting, making the total number of ordinary members 36. The voting box was sealed and signed by Lilia Rebai from EuroMed Rights secretariat and the two assessors, Aissa Rahmouni and Giorgio Caracciolo.

The voting was reopened the next day, 14 October in the morning until 12:30.

III-Looking forward

Gianluca Mengozzi moderating the first session, welcomed the participants to the second day of the General assembly and presented the agenda of the day. The day would focus on looking ahead, with a focus on the revised strategic framework for 2022-2027 and budget for 2025-2027, as well as the election of the new Executive Committee and president.

Before that, a small change to the statutes would be proposed, and the moderator, invited Theodora Cristou to present the suggested changes to the statutes.

1-STATUTES

It was explained that it was a very minor change to be suggested, rather a correction of a mistake in the current statutes, however, as any statutory change requires approval by the GA, the change would be presented to the GA for approval.

The proposed change was to the article 4.2 to make a technical correction so that the paragraph starting with 'candidacies' referring to 4.2.4 would refer to 4.1.4.

The proposed Amendments:

4.2 Executive Committee

(...)

4.2.3. Candidacy

Candidacies must reach the Secretariat at least 45 days before the first day of the General Assembly.

A candidacy must originate from the headquarters of a Regular Member. It must be accompanied by a letter of intent and specify whether it is a candidacy for the position of President.

Candidacies are sent to EuroMed Rights' Members at the same time as all statutory documents and within the time limits set out in article 4.1.4.

The other terms and conditions governing candidacies are set out in the Bylaws.



2-STRATEGY AND PROVISIONAL BUDGET 2025 – 2027

The moderator then gave the floor to Wadih Al-Asmar, Rasmus a. Boserup, executive director, and Bjarke Kronborg, Finance director, to present the revised strategic framework 2022-2027 and the provisional budget 2025-2027.

2.1 Revised strategic framework 2022-2027¹⁰

Wadih Al-Asmar outlined the strategic vision behind the revision of the strategy, emphasizing the need for a long-term vision while remaining adaptable to the shifting geopolitical landscape. He then handed over to Rasmus A. Boserup, who raised the following points:

This strategic revision aims to ensure that EMR remains relevant and impactful in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment while fostering collaboration among its members to achieve shared goals of human rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The duration onf the Strategic Framework's Duration is six years, allowing for a comprehensive vision while acknowledging the impact of geopolitical contexts. Therefore a mid-term review was scheduled from November 2023 to June 2024 to assess progress and make necessary adjustments. The process included a thorough analysis of strenghts and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats, and consultations with staff, parttners, donors and members. Overall this lead to the following adjustments:

Shift from Promotion to Protection: in light of the of the current geo-political challenged highlighted also in the political report yesterday, the overarching approach of the strategy will transition from promoting rights to actively protecting them.

Identity Statement: A stronger identity statement has been developed to reflect the organization's commitment

Mainstreaming: Continued focus on gender, youth, and climate change across all objectives have been formulated in the beginning of the document as a value that we mainstream across all work.

Work Methods: maintaining existing methods while placing a heightened focus on mobilizing and advocacy efforts.

In relaton to the goals of the strategy, the following adjustments are suggested:

Reinforced Migration and Asylum:: Same scope and name, but with an increased emphasis on climate change and artificial intelligence as the issues relate to migration.

Increased Gender Equality: Slight modification to the title to reflect broader inclusivity, including LGBTQI+ rights. The scope remains , emphasizing the importance of gender equality in all aspects.

Strengthened Justice and Accountability: Scope Change: This goal will now exclude civil society spaces to better differentiate between goals 3 and 4, with new objectives introduced.

Safeguarded Freedom, Democracy, and Space for Civil Society: Name and Scope: The title has been adapted to align with the revised protection approach. There scope will be broadened from the previously narrow focus on Tunisia.

¹⁰ The Revised stategic framework 2022-2027 is available on our website: [link...xxx](#). For the PP presentation shown at the GA; contact the Secretariat.



Enhanced Economic and Social rights: Name and Scope: Reduced scope for cultural rights. This goal will see a reduction in scope and objectives, streamlining efforts and including economic and social rights more under the programs.

Wadih al-Asmar finished by saying that the achievement of these political goals can only be achieved through participation and contribution of members in capacity-building activities, engagement in advocacy missions, contribution to communication efforts via working groups, which will have the added value of enhancing collaboration and thus strengthening the Network and the fight for human rights in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Provision budget 2025-2027¹¹

Rasmus A.Boserup then presented the key principles and considerations for the budget plan for 2025-2027, structured to align with revised strategic framework 2022-2027.

Total Budget Allocation: The Total budget is set at **11 million EUR**, which serves as the **minimum necessary** to effectively deliver on the strategic objectives. The budget reflects **continuity** with previous triennial budgets, adjusted to reflect that a few large grant-funded projects are coming to an end. It ensures alignment with past commitments while adapting to current strategic needs. The budget is informed by realistic **fundraising targets** given the current donor landscape and prioritize diversifying funding sources to mitigate risks associated with potential shortfalls.

The proposed distribution to allocate funds is based on a **strategic distribution model** that emphasizes both political and organizational goals: **57%** for political goals and **43%** for organizational goal. Among the political goals, the model foresees 16 % for migration and asylum; 16% on gender equality; 38% on justice and accountability; 22 % on freedom, and 8% on economic and social rights. The third goal on justice is allocated the highest share, reflecting the primary focus of most of our work. In relation to the organisational goals, 18% is allocated to the membership goal, 22% to visibility, 5% to carbon footprint, 21% to financial sustainability, 15 % to learning, and then 13% have been allocated to new development, recalling the geopolitical focus in the strategy of expanding more into Europe.

Rasmus also explained that overall EuroMed Right has national and regional programs that contribute to each of these goals. Some programs contribute to one goal, some programs to more goals. Among the national programs, priority is given to Egypt and Tunisia, based on both ongoing commitments and future aspiration, while regional programs mainly focus on migration, gender and justice, with smaller contributions to freedom and eco-social rights initiatives. A portion of the budget is reserved as unallocated to allow for flexibility and responsiveness to emerging opportunities or challenges.

The Secured Income Assessment: Rasmus explained that the secured income assessment appears stable for 2025 but that there are increasing gaps for 2026 and 2027, necessitating proactive strategies for income generation.

¹¹ The provisional budget was among the documents sent to participants ahead of the GA. For the PP presentation made at the GA, kindly contact the Secretariat.



Two key actions for risk mitigation were projected: to develop a risk management plan to address the potential shortfall in secured income for the later years of the budget cycle and consider contingency plans for fundraising and strategic partnerships to close any expected gaps; and to implement a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of budget allocation against strategic goals. Of course, all in all there should be a regular review process to adjust budget allocations to necessary to optimize impact.

Rasmus ended the presentation by reiterating that the budget for 2025-2027 should be designed to ensure strategic alignment with political and organizational goals while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances. By prioritizing key areas of focus and addressing potential income gaps proactively, the organization can position itself for sustained impact and growth in the coming years.

Discussion and comments:

Participants were eager to comment on the revised strategic framework and many comments and reflections were shared. Overall, participants welcomed the revised strategy, and comments were more on how to enhance it even further. Suggestions can be grouped around the following: **strengthening alliances** with organizations such as the World Social Forum and the African Social Forum, as well as climate forums to have more impact on the protection of human rights in the region; **incorporating solidarity** more clearly in the framework, as that is what binds the Network together; **inclusion of marginalized Groups**, such as Kurds and the LGBTIQ communities, as well as **engaging Youth** much more in all sphere of work, and give youth a clear mandate and agency within the Network. The need for being able to reevaluation of existing strategies in light of the urgent humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the changing geopolitical landscape in the region was stressed.

In relation to the budget, there seemed to be an overall understanding of and agreement to the budget and the transparent way it was developed and presented.

APPROVAL OF THE STRATEGY, PROVISIONAL BUDGET AND STATUTORY AMENDMENTS

After the quorum was confirmed with 39 ordinary members out of a total of 69 ordinary members present, the voting took place, with the following results:

Vote on statutory amendments: Against: 0, abstention: 0, approved unanimously.

Vote on the revised strategic framework 2022–2027: 0 against, abstention: 0, approved unanimously

Vote on the provisional budget 2025–2027: 0 against, 0 abstention, approved unanimously.

VOTING RESULTS FOR THE PRESIDENT AND EC ELECTIONS

The vote assessors confirmed that the voting had taken place according to the rule, and Lilia Rebai presented the voting results for the Executive Committee and the President elections.

She announced that the total number of ordinary members present at the close of voting (Day 1 and 2) was 53, that one ballot had been cancelled due to being incomprehensive, and that there was one abstention in the vote for President.

Election Results :

President elected : Monia Ben Jémia (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocratiques (ATFD), Tunisia): 38 votes

Organisation	Votes
1. Hamdi Shaqqura (El Mizan, Palestine) :	50 votes
2. Moataz El Fegier (Egyptian Human Rights Forum, Egypte):	50 votes
3. Mazen Darwish (Centre Syrien de Médias et de la liberté d'expression (SCM), Syrie) :	47 votes
4. Rümeysa Deniz Kaya (İnsann Haklari Dernegi (Human Rights Association), Turquie :	42 votes
5. Khadija Ainani (Association Marocaine Des Droits Humains, Maroc) :	26 votes
6. Tony Daly (80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World, Irlande):	48 votes
7. Spyros-Vlad Oikonomou (Greek Council for Refugees (GRC), Grèce):	46 votes
8. Theodora Christou (Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, Royaume Uni):	42 votes
9. Marie Christine Vergiat (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, France) :	41 votes
10. Dilyana Giteva (Center for legal aid – Voice in Bulgaria, Bulgarie):	40 votes
11. Gianluca Mengozzi (Italian Council for Refugees (CIR), Italie):	39 votes

The outgoing executive committee was thanked for all to work and commitment over the last three years, and the newly elected executive members welcomed, and informed that there would be the constituting meeting of the new Executive Committee right after the end of the GA.



Then Mounia ben Jemia, the newly elected president, thanks all the participants of the GA for electing her as the new president of EuroMed Rights, and thanked Lubna Dawani for all her work over the last many years as executive committee member.

She then went on to read the GA declaration, a draft of which members had received before the GA and had the opportunity to comment on during the GA. The final declaration is in its entirety in the last chapter of this GA report: Taking a stand. Following the reading of the GA declaration, the GA was officially declared over, and all participants thanked for their participation.

IV Taking a Stand

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARATION HUMAN RIGHTS – MORE THAN EVER!

Draft declaration of EuroMed Rights' 13th General Assembly, October 2024

On the occasion of its 13th General Assembly, EuroMed Rights and its 70 member organisations call on decision-makers and civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean region to put Human Rights at the forefront of their work.

Rarely has this been more crucial!

In the South-East of the Mediterranean, Israel's genocide on the Palestinians has continued with impunity for more than a year at an unprecedented human cost: Tens of thousands of people killed, countless wounded, and millions forcefully displaced and starved while torture and forms of mistreatment have become generalised. Rarely before has the Israeli state's violations of international humanitarian law, human rights standards, and liberal democratic norms been more flagrant. The recent escalation of Israel's attacks on the sovereign state of Lebanon now threatens to further expand the warfare with continued impunity. Elsewhere in the Southern Mediterranean region, authoritarian governments have stepped up their pressure on civil society, liberal movements, opposition parties, the media and human rights defenders alike. They have devoted unprecedented resources to crushing and criminalising those who ask for justice, rights and dignity.

North of the Mediterranean Sea, illiberal parties and movements are gaining unprecedented political victories. In many European countries they are no longer marginal protest actors who challenge the liberal democratic norms of the establishment. Rather, they have become the norm, and now constitute an integral part of the political establishment. Consequently, key institutions of the European Union and several of its member states have deviated from their past commitment to promote and protect human rights and democracy. As such, elected European political elites have actively restricted or undermined the rights and freedoms of their fellow citizens in multiple instances, and most European governments proactively seek to limit the fundamental rights and freedoms of migrants and asylum seekers.

The parallel crack down on the human rights and democracy movements in the Middle East, in North Africa and in Europe deeply affects the foreign policies that bind the states across the Mediterranean Sea together. Today a dark shadow of human rights violations is cast by the joint attempts on the part of European, North African and Middle Eastern governments to control their borders, to stabilise the state apparatuses, and to increase their security by unconditionally supporting warmongering countries like Israel.

In such moments of political collapse and renewal, it is more important than ever to recall that human rights remain the best available tool for ensuring peace and human prosperity. Only by applying a human rights policy domestically and in foreign relations do we stand a chance of institutionalising and regulating the conflicts that threaten to rip our Euro-Mediterranean region apart.

This reality is not lost on people. From the Northernmost parts of the European Union to the furthest most corners of the southern Mediterranean countries, new political generations are picking up where Arab Uprisings, Black Lives Matter and #Metoo campaigns ended: Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets over the past months alone to protest against their governments' foreign and domestic policies. They have demanded that politics be based on peace, justice, democracy, rights and freedoms. To them we say: We stand with you more than ever!

As actors from the human rights movement in the regions bordering the Mediterranean Sea, we furthermore commit to continue our joint fight for a prosperous future in the region build on the universal and undivided principles of human rights and democracy. We will continue our struggle to enhance justice and accountability for all human rights violations throughout our region. We will press on with our fight to increase gender equality in all aspects of life. We will carry on reinforcing the rights of refugees and asylum seekers denouncing illegal pushbacks and documenting breaches on international and domestic law. We will persist in pressuring states and intergovernmental institution to ensure that economic and social rights are protected in their foreign policies. And we will fight to safeguard democracy, to protect fundamental freedoms and to ensure a proper space for civil society to operate in every conner of the Euro-Mediterranean region.

ANNEX I

Side event Event "Justice and Accountability in and for Palestine"

On the morning of the 12 October, the seminar "**Justice and Accountability in and for Palestine**" organised in the framework of the Sabir Festival provided a comprehensive examination of the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza and its implications for human rights across the Euro-Mediterranean region. The session was marked by a strong emphasis on the historical and contemporary challenges faced by Palestinian people, underscoring the need for urgent action. Some Key Highlights from the Session are below:



Raffaella Bolini set the stage by discussing the historical context, emphasizing the dangers posed by a growing culture of suprematism, which undermines the Palestinian struggle for rights and dignity. Then Wadih Al-Asmar from EuroMed Rights articulated the critical need to defend human rights amidst a contracting space for human rights defenders, pointing directly to the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the lack of decisive action from the EU.

The State Secretary from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, spoke on the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, stressing the need for adherence to international law and the importance of avoiding double standards in foreign policy. The UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese painted a vivid picture of the devastation in Gaza, linking it to broader colonial legacies that perpetuate human rights violations against Palestinians. Hamdi Shaqurra, from the Palestinian Human Rights Center in Gaza and Issam Younis from Al-Mizan Center gave first hand information on the situation in Gaza, Enabtawy Rafea, Kayan Feminist Organization highlighted the situation for Palestinian in the Westbank and the violence faced in particularly accessing healthcare amidst the conflict, and Mazen Derwich from the Syrian Centre for Media freedoms, stressed the situation of Palestinians in Syria. Aarti Narsee, European Civic Forum focused on the response from Europe to the situation.

The panelist highlighted the failures in accountability and called for reevaluation of the international legal framework to address the ongoing violence. They insisted on the importance of narratives from Gaza, sharing individual stories to raise awareness globally and challenge the normalisation of violence, and on strengthening civil society solidarity also in light of the repression faced by Palestinian solidarity movements in Europe, linking these struggles to the broader fight for democracy and human rights.

The interactive discussion that followed, encouraged participants to explore their roles in promoting Palestinian rights and highlighted the necessity of unity among human rights defenders. The emphasis was placed on grassroots movements and the influence of media narratives in challenging oppression.

The session concluded with a powerful call to action, advocating for:

- A strengthened legal framework to ensure accountability for human rights violations.
- Enhanced recognition of the gendered impacts of violence on Palestinian women.
- A collective stand against the normalization of violence and the repression of advocacy efforts in Europe.
- Ongoing commitment to justice, accountability, and innovative strategies in the pursuit of Palestinian rights.

In summary, the seminar exhibited the horrors of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while reinforcing the critical need for international solidarity, accountability, and steadfast advocacy for human rights in Palestine. The discussions underscored the interconnectedness of struggles for justice and human rights across the Euro-Mediterranean region.

ANNEX I

“The impact on human rights standards of recent changes in EU’s partnerships policies in the Mediterranean region

The side event at the Sabir Festival titled **“The impact on human rights standards of recent changes in EU’s partnerships policies in the Mediterranean region”** brought together key speakers from various organizations and political backgrounds to discuss the implications of the European Union's (EU) partnership policies on human rights, particularly in relation to migration.

Gianluca Mengozzi from ARCI opened the session by highlighted the significant focus on migration within Italian and European foreign policy, noting how this discourse often overshadows other critical issues, such as the Palestinian situation. Marie-Christine Vergiat from EuroMed Rights emphasized the erosion of human rights in EU partnerships with neighboring countries, criticizing the informal nature of these agreements that bypass EU legal standards.

Tarek Megerisi from the European Council for Foreign Relations discussed the paradox of European migration policies, which often scapegoat migrants while simultaneously acknowledging the economic need for them. He condemned the externalization of border control, particularly referencing agreements with Libya and Tunisia, which have led to human rights abuses and the empowerment of militias. Megerisi called for a shift in resource allocation from border control to legal migration pathways.

Timothy Kaldas from the Tahrir Institute criticized the political nature of European migration policies, suggesting that these deals are more about electoral tactics than effective migration management. He pointed out the failure of economic support programs like the IMF's initiatives in Egypt, which have not translated into improved living conditions, thus fueling migration.

Milena Zajovic, a journalist and human rights defender, discussed the issue of pushbacks in Croatia and the broader implications for human rights in the Western Balkans, where countries are pressured to adopt EU migration policies without the prospect of EU membership.

Mounir Satouri, a Member of the European Parliament, lamented the EU's failure to act in favor of human rights and democracy in the Mediterranean. He criticized the EU's financial support to authoritarian regimes while neglecting democratic aspirations in the region.

Laura Boldrini, from the Italian Chamber of Deputies, highlighted the erosion of human rights globally and the need for a unified response to address violations, particularly in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Monia Ben Jemia from the Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates addressed the detrimental effects of the EU's migration policies on Tunisia, emphasizing the regime's human rights abuses and the lack of support for democratic movements.

Moataz El Fegierly from the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies described Egypt's deteriorating human rights situation, criticizing the EU's complicity in supporting the regime despite its oppressive tactics.

Wadi al Asmar, President of EuroMed Rights, discussed the EU's approach to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, which involves indirect pressure to repatriate them, raising significant legal and ethical concerns about human rights.

The session concluded with a Q&A where participants raised concerns about the role of European energy companies in these agreements and questioned the EU's support for regimes that exacerbate migration crises. Kaldas reiterated the need for advocacy to focus on human rights and the inherent contradictions in current policies. Zajovic advocated for transparency and accountability in governmental actions regarding migration.

The event underscored a critical perspective on the EU's current approach to migration and partnerships in the Mediterranean, emphasizing the need for a shift towards policies that prioritize human rights and democratic values over short-term political gains. Participants collectively called for a reassessment of policies that have led to human rights violations and the need for a more humane and just approach to migration in the region.