

EC MEETING

Paris 20-23 May 2004

Summary

Approved by the CE

The EMHRN Executive Committee (EC) met in Paris in May 2004. At the meeting, the EC members discussed amongst other, the EMHRN strategy including reforms in the Arab world, the financial situation of the EMHRN and the Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH, EMHRN member organisation), the arrest of Aktham Naisse (President of the Committees for the Defense of Democratic Liberties and Human Rights in Syria, CDF, and individual member of the EMHRN), and EMHRN membership applications/ cancellations.

In relation to the meeting, Kamel Jendoubi (EMHRN President) and Sandrine Grenier (EMHRN Coordinator in Brussels) met with André Janier, Ambassador responsible for the Barcelona Process at the French Foreign Ministry, 24th of May.

Present:

From the EC: Kamel Jendoubi (President), Bahey El-Din Hassan (EC member), Randa Siniora (EC member), Reyhan Yalcindag (EC member, attended the meeting from Friday afternoon), Eva Norström (Vice President, attended the meeting from Thursday evening), Michel Tubiana (EC member), and Theocharis Papamargaris (Treasurer).

From the Secretariat: Marc Schade-Poulsen (Executive Director); Sandrine Grenier (EMHRN staff), Marit Flø Jørgensen (EMHRN staff), and Maibritt Damgaard Nielsen (EMHRN staff, rapporteur)

Absent: EC members Klaus Slavensky, Rabéa Naciri and Colm Regan (all with notification).

The documents for the meeting (distributed by mail prior to the meeting):

1. Practical information
2. Agenda for the EC meeting
3. Minutes from the EC meeting, Copenhagen 6-8 February 2004 (2 documents)
4. EMHRN Narrative Report
5. Troika meeting minutes 17 March 2004
6. Troika meeting minutes 6 May 2004
7. EMHRN Financial report (4 documents)
8. EMHRN Work plan (2 documents)
9. Reports from
 - a. Morocco mission, 26-30 March 2004
 - b. Human Rights Education Working Group (2 documents)
 - c. Kurdish Working Group
 - d. EcoSoc Meeting, Florence 24-26 March 2004
 - e. Palestine Working Group
10. Strategy papers:
 - a. Bahey El-Din Hassan: Democratization and Human Rights in the Arab World (5 documents)
 - b. Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier: Human Rights Mechanisms
 - c. Rabéa Naciri: Mainstreaming women rights within the EMHRN
 - d. Rabéa Naciri: Networking and the EMHRN
11. Strategy Chart
12. Budget re strategy chart
13. Membership applications
14. Business cards for the EC members (example)

If you want to consult the documents, please contact the EMHRN Secretariat.

The main points on the agenda before the EC meeting were the following:

1. *Briefings about developments since last meeting*
 - *Political report*
 - *Activity report*
 - *Financial report*
2. *Meeting with representatives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (to be confirmed)*
3. *Developing strategy of EMHRN work on the basis of General Assembly decisions, including prioritizing EMHRN Work*
4. *Urgent issues*
5. *Membership applications and cancellations*
6. *Constitution of the Executive Committee*
7. *Miscellaneous*

The final agenda adopted at the meeting was as follows:

1. *Adoption of minutes from the last EC meeting, Copenhagen 6-8 February 2004*
2. *Briefings about developments since last meeting*
 - *Political report: Kamel Jendoubi*
 - *Narrative report: Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier*
 - *Financial report: Theocharis Papamargaris*
3. *Briefing about working Groups and missions*
 - *Palestine Working Group*
 - *Human Rights Education Working Group*
 - *Kurdish Working Group*
4. *Strategy papers*

Bahey El-Din Hassan: Democratization and Human Rights in the Arab World
Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier: Human Rights Mechanisms
5. *Strategy Chart: Prioritizing EMHRN Work*
6. *Membership applications and cancellations:*

Applications

 1. *Regular members:*
 - a. *ATFD (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates)*
 - b. *AMDH (Association Marocaine des Droits Humains)*
 - c. *Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies*
 - d. *Malta Foundation For International Studies*
 - e. *Iraqi Human Rights Society*
 2. *Individual members:*
 - a. *Jon Rud, Lawyer, Norway*
 - b. *Negad El Borai; Lawyer, Egypt*

Cancellations:

 1. *KHRP (Kurdish Human Rights Project)*
 2. *Sa'eda Kilani*
7. *Urgencies: Aktham Naisse, and Turkish EU accession (based on document from Kurdish WG)*
8. *Constitution of the EC: role of the Vice president, political referents, EC's time registration*

Amendments to the agenda distributed prior to the EC meeting:

The meeting with representatives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Kamel Jendoubi (EMHRN President) and Sandrine Grenier (EMHRN coordinator in Brussels) met with André Janier, Ambassador responsible for the Barcelona Process at the French Foreign Ministry, 24th of May.

As The EC decided not to discuss papers prepared for the EC meeting by EC members not present at the meeting, the discussion of EC member Rabea Naciri's draft papers was postponed to the next EC meeting, 29-31 October.



1. MINUTES

Decision:

Minutes from the last EC meeting, Copenhagen 6-8 February 2004, were approved.

2. BRIEFING ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST EC MEETING (EMHRN Narrative, Financial and Political reports)

Moderator: EMHRN President Kamel Jendoubi

EMHRN Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the EMHRN Narrative report from December 2003 until May 2004 to the EC members.

EMHRN Treasurer Theocharis Papamargaris and Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the EMHRN financial situation – as well as the 2003 Audit report - including the update on the EU call for proposals, which no longer contains a restrained call for proposals of 1 million euros for networking within the EMP. This means that the EMHRN is currently without financial future EU means to ensure its continued work at the present level, as a new possible EU contract was thought to constitute the core funding of the EMHRN. The EMHRN will try to find out what happened and what can be done.

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) has decided to fund the EMHRN for the coming 6 months which will ensure a full staff Secretariat, an EC meeting, and a translation and travel budget (total of approx. 250.000 euros). Furthermore, the Danish MFA will make the evaluation needed of the EMHRN in order, eventually, to conclude a framework agreement by January 2005.

Discussion point:

How does the EMHRN secure its work from January 2005?

There are several possible new sources of funding. It was noted that the EMHRN should attempt not to get too dependent on a few major donors (the EU Commission and Danish MFA) hereby risking to forget its mandate/ objectives in the funding process.

Decisions:

1. The audit for 2003 was approved
2. A task group responsible for fundraising consisting of Kamel Jendoubi, Bahey El-Din Hassan, Marc Schade-Poulsen and Theocharis Papamargaris was set up to discuss the question of medium and long term fundraising strategies for the EMHRN

3. WORKING GROUPS AND MISSIONS

Moderator: EC member Michel Tubiana

Morocco mission:

EMHRN Brussels Coordinator Sandrine Grenier and President Kamel Jendoubi informed the EC of the mission to Morocco 26-30 March 2004. The EMHRN was in Morocco in relation to the EU HR Action Plan for Morocco and explored dimensions of this plan with the EMHRN members, other Moroccan NGOs and the government. It was suggested to circulate the experience of the cooperation with members in Morocco as it can constitute an example/ model for other countries (despite of the differences in the region).

Tunisia mission:

The funds of the LTDH (EMHRN member organisation), Tunisia, have been blocked and the LTDH risks closing down by the end of May. At the Troika meeting, May 6th, it was decided to send EMHRN Vice President Eva Norström to Tunisia and to ask our members to make contributions to the LTDH. Eva Norström briefed the EC about her meetings with the LTDH and 6 independent organisations and 3 different opposition parties, which all face oppression.

Discussion points:

The EC identified two problems: the immediate problem of funding for the offices of the LTDH and the need to raise awareness of the situation and strategize on the long term.

Different organisations have volunteered to support the LTDH financially.

Decisions:

The EMHRN should

1. Continue the campaign in order to collect money (ask member organisations to show solidarity)
2. Follow up with Foundations which have been asked to support the LTDH
3. Set up a WG on Tunisia with Tunisian NGOs, international NGOs, and to get EU people involved to strategize about what to do on short- medium and longer terms
4. Put pressure on the EU and the EU member states (both as EMHRN and the single EMHRN members) to condemn the Tunisian governments unacceptable freezing of funds for independent organisations

Mission to Cyprus

EMHRN Treasurer Theocharis Papamargaris informed about the mission to Cyprus in relation to the referendum on a unified state. He met with Turkish and Greek NGOs, the EU delegation, the Cyprus MFA and the UNDP. The Greek NGOs have been promoting bi-communal relations, but have not formed strong NGOs. The Turkish NGOs are better organized and grouped into larger platforms. The UNDP expressed interest in meeting with the EMHRN in order to explore the EMHRN's ability to assist the NGOs and civil society

'Troika' meetings:

EMHRN President Kamel Jendoubi informed about the Troika meetings that are held in Copenhagen every 6-8 weeks. (The Troika consists of EMHRN President Kamel Jendoubi, Vice President Eva Norström, and Treasurer Theocharis Papamargaris.) It was noted that the meetings are useful in overviewing the work the EMHRN in between the EC meetings and facilitating the EMHRN Secretariat in its work.

Eco-Soc Workshop in Florence

EMHRN Treasurer and EC referent on Eco-Soc issues, Theocharis Papamargaris informed about the successful workshop at the Mediterranean Conference at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence on Eco-Soc rights in the Euro-Med and the impact of the free trade zone, 24-26 March 2004. The workshop was jointly organized by the EMHRN and the EUI.

Arab Civil Forum in Beirut on Reform in the Arab World

EMHRN EC member Bahey El-Din Hassan informed about the Arab Civil Forum organized by the CIHRS in coordination with Lebanese NGOs, FIDH and EMHRN in Beirut, 19-22 March 2004, on reform in the Arab world. He distributed the declaration 'Second Independence: Towards an Initiative for Political Reform in the Arab World', which was adopted at the meeting.

Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform for the Civil Forum

EMHRN Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen informed about the follow-up group meeting in Paris 28-29 May where the membership criteria of the Platform will be discussed. At the meeting in Cyprus 25-26 June the Strategy paper will be revisited, the definitions of Civil Society should be clarified and a work plan should be developed, which will then lead up to a General Assembly at the Civil Forum to take place under the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU.

EMHRN President Kamel Jendoubi clarified that the EMHRN is involved in a two-track process: On the one hand developing the Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform and on the other hand strengthening the Civil Forum process.

EMHRN Human Rights Education Working Group

EMHRN project coordinator Marit Flø Jørgensen presented the work plan of the EMHRN HRE WG's future work in terms of aim, role, overall objectives, and specific objectives of the WG (it was also presented to the Troika 6 May in EC member Colm Regan's presence).

Discussion point:

Should the HRE WG continue with its work according to the work plan presented?

Decisions:

1. The HRE WG got the mandate to continue its work according to the Work Plan until the next EC meeting (but should try to balance between work on content and work on process)
2. The HRE WG should carry out an evaluation of its work for the next EC meeting in order to enable the EC to discuss its work and learn from its experience. The methodology of the evaluation could be used for all working groups and should thus have a specific and a general approach.
3. The EC should use half a day to discuss the evaluation of the work of the HRE WG and identify guidelines for WGs at the next EC meeting, 29-31 October 2004

EMHRN Palestinian Working Group

EC member in charge of the EMHRN Palestine WG, Randa Siniora presented the recent work of the Palestine Working Group and informed that the next Palestine Working Group meeting in June would be pre-exempted by a lobbying meeting.

Discussion points

Randa Siniora raised the question of the role of the working groups and the EC in relation to statements. Furthermore, Randa Siniora asked to have feed back regarding a possible meeting between non-governmental donors and Palestinian and Israeli NGOs on 14 June in Jerusalem/ Ramallah.

Decisions:

1. The content of EMHRN statements are decided by the EC. In case of urgencies, the statements are decided by the President.
2. The Non-governmental donor meeting should be pursued.

4. EMHRN STRATEGY (including strategy papers by EC member Bahey El-Din Hassan and Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier (Executive Director and Brussels coordinator))

Moderator: EC member Randa Siniora

Reforms in the Arab world (strategy paper by EC member, Bahey El-Din Hassan)

Bahey El-Din Hassan presented his document on reforms in the Arab world. It was stated that the final declaration from the Civil Forum Meeting in Beirut, 19-22 March, 2004, "Second Independence" is a very comprehensive framework for political reform in the region, and that its proposals should be discussed in order to explore where the EMHRN can add value.

HR Mechanisms (strategy paper by Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier)

Brussels coordinator, Sandrine Grenier, presented the 2 documents on the HR mechanisms.

The main conclusions were:

- a. Within the Barcelona process, the EMHRN should focus on the mechanisms of the Association Agreements and use it as a protection instrument
- b. It should focus more on the EU delegations in the Partners countries
- c. The EU Neighborhood policy will use the mechanisms and instruments of the EMP already in place
- d. The EMHRN needs to work more on member states and not only the EU institutions
- e. The EMHRN has to go more public and use the media

5. EMHRN STRATEGY CHART

Moderator: EC member Bahey El-Din Hassan

EMHRN Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen presented a draft Strategy chart (was also presented at the Troika meeting 6th May, see Annex 1).

The Strategy chart consists of 4 basic fields of work that are all interlinked: HR mechanisms, Outreach, Networking, and Training. The Arab reform program is lacking in the chart and should be included. For

each box in the Strategy chart, it should be stated what to achieve on different terms (long and short term) which will help to build in evaluation mechanisms. The EC was asked to endorse the strategy chart and to discuss it in terms of prioritising

Discussion point:

What is the added value of the EMHRN?

There was an overall agreement that the Networking methodology and the focus on EuroMed relations in itself are the added value of the EMHRN

Decisions in relation to the EMHRN Strategy:

1. The Strategy chart elaborated by Marc Schade-Poulsen was approved
2. The "Second Independence" document was adopted as a framework document for work on reform in the Arab world
3. Work on "Democratisation" should be a major cornerstone in the EMHRN strategy
4. The issue of the Arab reform should be set on the agenda for the Civil Forum Extended Platform meeting in Cyprus, 25-26 June 2004
5. The EMHRN should work on a media strategy

6. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS AND CANCELLATIONS

Moderator: Vice President Eva Norström

Applications:

There were two categories of membership applicants: those who applied according to old statutes and those applying according to new statutes:

According to old statutes:

1. Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD) was accepted as a regular member
2. Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH) was accepted as a regular member
3. Amman Center for Human Rights Studies was accepted as a regular member
4. Foundation for International Studies, Malta, was accepted as an associate member
5. Jon Rud, Lawyer, Norway, was accepted as individual member
6. Negad El-Borai, Lawyer, Egypt, was accepted as individual member

According to new statutes (adopted at the EMHRN General Assembly 2003):

1. Iraqi Human Rights Society was accepted as an associate member.

Humanist Committee on Human Rights (HOM), The Netherlands should forward lacking documents required for membership applications and hereafter its application will be discussed at the coming EC meeting in October.

Final adoption of all new members takes place upon ratification by the General Assembly.

Cancellations:

1. Saeda Kilani as individual member (on her request)
2. KHRP as regular member (on its request)

7. URGENCIES (the case of EMHRN member Aktham Naisse and EMHRN position on the Turkish EU accession)

Moderator: Vice President Eva Norström

The case of EMHRN member Aktham Naisse

EMHRN Project coordinator Marit Flø Jørgensen informed on the situation of Aktham Naisse, President of the CDF and Individual EMHRN member, who was arrested on the 13 April 2004 and has been imprisoned since then. He has allegedly suffered a stroke and is partly paralyzed. He is allegedly denied medical care of which he is in urgent need of.

Discussion point:

What can the EMHRN do in support of Aktham Naisse?

Decisions:

The EMHRN should

1. Send a letter to the Syrian President Bashar Al-Asad asking for Aktham Naisse's access to medical care and his immediate release
2. Contact the International Red Cross to ask them to visit Aktham Naisse in prison and intervene on a humanitarian basis
3. Send a letter to the EU ministers of Foreign Affairs asking them to intervene
4. Address the UN mechanisms (OHCHR and the Special Rapporteur for Human rights defenders etc.)
5. Contact the Coordinator for the Arab region at the OHCHR, and ask him to take action
6. Contact International Commission of Jurists to ask for their presence at the trial

Turkish EU accession:

The conclusions from a document made by Jon Rud, convener of the Kurdish WG, on the Turkish accession to the EU were presented at the EC meeting. Furthermore, the discussion on the Turkish accession revealed the need to have a more elaborated discussion.

Discussion point:

Could the EC adopt the document by Jon Rud?

Decisions:

1. As the EC members had not received the document in time prior to the meeting and therefore not read it, they could not adopt it.
2. EC member in charge of the Kurdish WG Reyhan Yalcindag will revise the document on the Turkish EU accession and circulate it to the EC members. The EC members should receive and comment on the document before the next Troika meeting, 1st July.
3. At the next EC meeting, the EC will have a framework discussion on the EMHRN position on Turkey's accession to the EU

8. CONSTITUTION OF THE EC (role of the Vice president, political referents, EC's time registration)

Moderator: Vice President Eva Norström

Role of the Vice president

Discussion point:

What is the role of the EMHRN Vice president (Eva Norström)?

Decision:

The suggestion regarding the role of the Vice president, drafted by EC member Colm Regan, was adopted: The Vice President will function as the referent point for coordination of working groups as a particular field of work.

Political referents

The EC members were delegated different areas of responsibilities for the rest of their mandate:

1. Working group on women's rights: Rabéa Naciri
2. Education: Colm Regan
3. Training: Kamel Jendoubi and Randa Siniora
4. Kurdish WG: Reyhan Yalcindag
5. Palestine WG: Randa Siniora
6. Migration and Refugees: Michel Tubiana
7. Media: Kamel Jendoubi
8. Civil forum: Kamel Jendoubi
9. HR mechanisms: Kamel Jendoubi
10. Brussels office: Kamel Jendoubi
11. Arab reform: Bahey El-Din Hassan
12. Relation to international organizations: Kamel Jendoubi
13. Iraq: Klaus Slavensky
14. Relation to staff: Kamel Jendoubi
15. Fundraising: Theocharis Papamargaris
16. Tunisia: Kamel Jendoubi
17. Economic and social rights: Theocharis Papamargaris
18. Justice: Michel Tubiana

Other decisions:

1. President Kamel Jendoubi and Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen will develop a plan to enhance the internal communication within the EMHRN

EC members' time registration

Decision:

1. In the future, the EC members should register how much time they are spending on the EC work in a simple scheme (to be developed by Executive Director Marc Schade-Poulsen and President Kamel Jendoubi).

OTHER DECISIONS

1. The next EC meeting, 29-31 October 2004 (dates decided at the EC meeting in February 2004).
Proposed venue: Alexandria, Egypt.

Annex 1: EMHRN Strategy chart

OVERALL CONTEXT: THE EUROMED REGION (AND BEYOND)

