



EMHRN Executive Committee Meeting

Copenhagen August 4-6 2006

Minutes

To be approved

The EMHRN Executive Committee (EC) elected at the EMHRN General Assembly in Madrid on May 12-14 2006 convened in Copenhagen on August 4-6 2006. At the meeting, the EC members discussed amongst other the key developments in the Euro-Mediterranean region, in particular the situation in Lebanon, Israel and Gaza. As it was the first time the newly elected EC was gathered, an evaluation of the former EC work was made, and the staff and EC members were presented to each other. Finally, an evaluation of the EMHRN General Assembly on May 12-14 2006 was made, and the evaluations made by the staff members and participants were presented.

Prior to the EC meeting, on August 4 2006 in the morning, the Executive Committee members, EMHRN Executive Director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, and EMHRN Programme director, Marit Flø Jørgensen had a public meeting with representatives of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and different Danish NGOs engaged in work with the Arab region to discuss the *Major Trends in Human Rights in the Arab region and Responses to these by Civil Society*. EC members Kamel Jendoubi, Rabéa Naciri, Nizam Assaf, Moataz El Fegieri and Michel Tubiana gave a short presentation of important trends in human rights work and the role civil society can play in this regard as seen from their position and daily work. Some of the issues that were touched upon at the meeting were the question of democratic reform, women's rights, the rights of migrants and refugees and the situation in Lebanon and Gaza.



PARTICIPANTS

Participants from the EMHRN Executive Committee (EC):

Kamel Jendoubi (President), Eva Norstroem, Colm Regan, Rabéa Naciri, Michel Tubiana, Maria De Donato, Birgit Lindsnæs, Nizam Assaf, Moataz El Fegieri, and Iain Byrne.

From the Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (EMHRN Executive Director), Marit Flø Jørgensen (EMHRN Programme director), Nels Lyngsø (EMHRN Controller), Lars Zbinden Hansen (EMHRN Administrative coordinator), Line Gamrath Rasmussen (EMHRN Project coordinator) (participated on August 4), Fabrice Liebaut (EMHRN Project coordinator) (participated on August 4), Ashraf Mikhail (EMHRN IT coordinator) (participated on August 4).

Absent:

EC members: Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar and Nina Atallah – both with notification.

Secretariat: Sandrine Grenier (EMHRN Brussels Coordinator), Habib Belkouch (Director of the EMHRN project on Migration, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Morocco), and Maibritt Damgaard Nielsen (EMHRN Executive secretary).

DOCUMENTS FOR THE MEETING

Documents distributed by mail prior to the meeting, i.e. on July 24 and 31 2006 (in black):

1. **Draft agenda**
2. **Practical information**
3. **Minutes from the EC meeting in Paris February 2006**
4. **CV of the EC members**
5. **Organisational chart (in English only)**
6. **Staff functions**
7. **Staff positions**
8. **Staff regulation**
9. **Statutes**
10. **By laws**
11. **Work plan until December 2006**
12. Financial report
13. **Evaluation of the GA made by staff (draft)**
14. **Strategy**
15. Budget
16. **Summary of decisions adopted at the GA**
17. **Presentation Gender mainstreaming (Rabéa Naciri)**
18. **Listing of EC members responsibilities**
19. **Summary of the ENP Seminar in Lebanon**
20. **An update of the EMHRN activities**
21. **Evaluation of the GA made by participants (draft)**
22. **Work programme 2006-2008**
23. Profit and loss accounts

Documents presented at the meeting:

12. Financial report
15. Budget
23. Profit and loss accounts

If you wish to consult the documents, please contact Maibritt Nielsen from the EMHRN Secretariat at mdn@euromedrights.net

FINAL AGENDA ADOPTED AT THE MEETING

1. **Welcome**
 - a. Approval of agenda
 - b. Approval of minutes from EC meeting in Paris on February 23-26 2006
2. **Discussion on the situation in Lebanon and the EMHRN statement (including phone conference with EC members Nina Atallah, Palestine and Wadih-Ange Al Asmar, Lebanon)**
3. **Presentation of the EMHRN Staff and organisational chart**
4. **Presentation of the Executive Committee members**
5. **Introduction to the functioning and activities of the EMHRN**
 - a. Experiences on the functioning of the retiring EC

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- b. Obligations and legal responsibilities of the EC members according to Danish Law and to the Statutes and the By laws
 - c. General survey of the work in progress (including the financial situation)
- 6. Conclusions of the General Assembly and policy debate on the EMHRN**
 - a. Evaluation of the General Assembly
 - b. Discussion on the conclusions of the General Assembly (strategy, work plan)
 - 7. Gender mainstreaming in the work of the Executive Committee**
 - 8. Setting up the Executive Committee: Roles, responsibilities and functioning**
 - 9. Dates for next EC meeting**
 - 10. 10th Anniversary of the EMHRN**

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1. Welcome

- a. Approval of agenda
- b. Approval of minutes from EC meeting in Paris on February 23-26 2006

Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi

Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, opened the EMHRN Executive Committee meeting by welcoming the newly elected Executive Committee to Copenhagen. He suggested that the EC members should begin the meeting by discussing the situation in Lebanon and an appropriate way to react to it taking into account that the EMHRN had issued a statement prior to the EC meeting.

a. Approval of agenda

Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, went through the agenda of the meeting and asked the EC members for their approval or comments to the agenda.

Decision:

- The agenda for the meeting was adopted unanimously by the EC members.

Suggestion:

- Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, suggested that EC member Michel Tubiana should substitute EC member Nina Atallah as chair of the closing session of the EC meeting in her absence.

b. Approval of minutes from EC meeting in Paris on February 23-26 2006

Decision:

- The Minutes from the last EMHRN Executive Committee meeting in Paris on February 23-26 2006 were approved by the former (and reelected) EC members present.

2. Discussion on the situation in Lebanon and the EMHRN statement (including phone conference with EC member Nina Atallah, Palestine and Wadih-Ange Al Asmar, Lebanon)

Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi

EC member Michel Tubiana presented the background to the current situation in Gaza and Lebanon explaining that the situation in Lebanon had become worse and that there was a lack of reaction from the international community leading to a radicalisation of the population. Michel Tubiana mentioned that the EMHRN statement made by some of the members of the Working Group on Palestine, Israel, Palestinians was unique in its response to the situation.

Furthermore, Michel Tubiana stressed the importance of separating the situation in Gaza from the one in Lebanon, the reason being that they are different – and so are the solutions to the problems. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of distinguishing between politics and human rights. In a statement on the situation in Lebanon, the EMHRN should make reference to the Geneva conventions and address the fact that civilians are targeted.

Telephone conference with EC member Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar, Lebanon:

Prior to the EC meeting, on August 4, EC member Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar, Lebanon, had sent a mail with suggestions for EMHRN action and informed the EC that the bridges from Beirut to the North were destroyed and that there were about 1000 dead (see his e-mail for suggestions for EMHRN action). Michel Tubiana supported Al-Asmar's suggestion to urge all EMHRN members to do lobbying to stop the war.

Rabéa Naciri suggested that the EMHRN should send a mission to Lebanon and perhaps link it up to a march that has been planned to take place in Lebanon on August 12 2006. The EMHRN should also take the lead in lobbying towards the EU and make it clear that it is not a question of the EU not being able to react but rather a lack of political will. And finally, she suggested sending the EMHRN statement to the Arabic media, e.f. to Al-Jazeera, in order to give them another view on the situation than current ones being disseminated.

Telephone conference with EC member Nina Atallah, Palestine:

From Ramallah Nina Atallah informed the EC members that the Israeli had strengthened the invasion of Gaza since June 2006; they targeted the civilian infrastructure, closed the border of Rafah, and bombed houses with only half an hour of warning to the families. According to Nina Atallah, the humanitarian situation in Gaza is deteriorating with no respect for human rights and humanitarian law and she expressed the need of drawing the international community's attention to the current situation. She looked upon the lack of intervention and reactions from the international community as a true backlash. Nina Atallah mentioned that on the West bank the situation was unchanged with check points and severe restrictions on freedom of movement. Finally, Nina Atallah informed the EC members that Al-Haq has issued a lot of statements and documented the human rights violations and asked for the EMHRN support to the activities.

EC member Colm Regan stressed the importance of issuing a statement from the EC meeting in order to provide guidance to the media and the EMHRN members. He suggested doing a research project to document the violations to be able to use it strategically on a medium term. Furthermore, he suggested strengthening the communication with the Palestinian and Israeli members. Finally, he suggested sending a mission to London as it would be good place to start lobbying. Colm Regan supported EC member Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar's proposal to encourage EMHRN members to specifically ask their governments to undertake specific actions that go beyond calling for ceasefire.

EC member Iain Byrne supported Colm Regan's idea of putting pressure on the UK government. He added that Israel should be held responsible for their actions according to international jurisdiction. Also Moataz El Fegiery agreed with Colm Regan about mobilising Europe and particular the UK. He further suggested having an international day on Lebanon and having parallel events going on in the region. Birgit Lindsnæs agreed to focus on Europe but put forward the idea of lobbying in the countries in favour of the US policy in the region.

EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen reported back from the EMHRN members based in Lebanon; the SOLIDA and the René Moawad Foundation are doing humanitarian work, the Foundation for Human and Humanitarian Rights in Lebanon is documenting the violations, also of Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Human Rights Organisation in Lebanon (PHRO) is also documenting the situation. Marc Schade-Poulsen suggested that the Lebanese delegation going to Brussels to lobby for the ENP and Action plan could also go to other European capitals. He further suggested calling to the other big human rights organisations to know what they are doing.

EC member Nizam Assaf agreed with EC member Nina Atallah that people in the region are looking for reactions from the international community and that the fact that 3 weeks have passed without the calling for a ceasefire is discrediting the international community and putting the region at a cross road. He suggested that the EMHRN should analyse the situation, take clear principal positions and then make a long time strategy. Furthermore, the EMHRN should call upon the UN and the EU to organise international conferences to prevent developments as those in Lebanon and Gaza, bring people from Lebanon to Brussels, and coordinate with other international organisations and to discuss joint actions with them, Nizam Assaf suggested.

EC member Eva Norström stressed the need for a thorough analysis of the situation as well as the need for the Lebanese delegation going to Brussels to lobby in the European countries. The EMHRN should provide its members with the same information on the situation and thus activate the Network. EC Maria De Donato agreed with Eva Norström's suggestion.

EC member, Rabéa Naciri, stressed the importance of showing solidarity by sending a mission to Lebanon followed by a meeting with the EMHRN members and others to decide on a long term sustainable action.

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi presented two problems: the question of how to make the governments work for peace and the question of how the Network can stay trustworthy in the eyes of its members, especially its Southern members.

Decisions:

There was an overall agreement among the EC members to take the following steps in relation to the situation in Lebanon:

Urgent level:

- Send a statement from the EC to the EMHRN members and the media (including suggestions from EC members Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar and Nina Atallah)
- Send a mission to Lebanon to listen to the EMHRN members and express solidarity. Nizam Assaf and Michel Tubiana volunteered to go on a solidarity mission to Lebanon. The EC gives the mandate to them in cooperation with the EMHRN staff to organise the mission

Short term:

- Lobby the EU and the EU member countries, including sending an appeal to the EMHRN members to lobby their governments
- Coordinating actions with other organisations (such as HRW, AI, FIDH) calling for a meeting in the near future and informing our members about the international day for Lebanon scheduled for August 12 2006

Medium term:

- Make a deeper analysis of the background and development of the situation. The EMHRN calls on the Palestine, Israel and Palestinians working group to enlarge its mandate and do a reflection and analysis of the situation with a focus on the Israeli motivation and strategy
- Support initiatives of taking responsible from Israel to court (in e.g. France)
- Call for high Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to meet

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- To engage the ENP to deal seriously with the effects of the situation

3. Presentation of the EMHRN Staff and organigram

Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi

The EC members and staff members presented themselves and also the organisational chart was presented

4. Presentation of the Executive Committee members

Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi

The Executive Committee members presented their educational and professional background.

EC member Rabéa Naciri proposed to have an evaluation of the EC after one year in order to see if the EC is using its resources in the best way and to see how many persons are needed to implement the EMHRN program.

5. Introduction to the functioning and activities of the EMHRN

- a. Experiences on the functioning of the retiring EC
- b. Obligations and legal responsibilities of the EC members according to Danish Law and to the Statutes and the By laws
- c. General survey of the work in progress (including the financial situation)

Moderator: Colm Regan

a. Experiences on the functioning of the retiring EC

The EC members present who had also been members of the retiring EC evaluated the functioning of the retiring EC. In short the evaluation ended up with the following key words for the future work of the EC:

- Need for clarity of the role and the mandate of the EC members (role of the members at a number of levels, of the troika, and of the treasurer)
- Make sure that the members have the opportunity to get acquainted with the EC
- Balance EC meetings between political debate and technicalities
- Better communication and on-going political debate between EC members in-between meetings and between Network and its members
- Co-responsibility - the need for EC members to be full and active members of the EC
- Need to return to core values of providing a platform for discussing human rights in the North and the South in the Barcelona Process

b. Obligations and legal responsibilities of the EC members according to Danish Law and to the Statutes and the By laws

EMHRN Executive Director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, explained that in Denmark there are no laws for associations meaning that illegal acts will be referred to specific law (defamation, the tax law etc.). The association as such will be held responsible and it is the responsibility of the EC members (collective responsibility) to ensure that the statutes and by-laws are followed. The only area of risk of board members being taken to court is when proper checks and balances are not set in place or when they transgress laws individually.

After the brief presentation of the obligations and legal responsibilities of the EC members, the EC agreed on the following decisions:

Decisions:

- The EMHRN is currently covered by Danish laws and the EC decided to ask for a brief to be prepared for the next EC meeting, explaining the individual and collective liabilities in this regard – and the application for Non-Dane members and the responsibility for their organisations
- Look at possibility and value of registration somewhere else
- Need to propose a methodology for revising the EMHRN Statutes for the next EC meeting

c. General survey of the work in progress (including the financial situation)

EMHRN Executive Director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, and EMHRN Controller, Nels Lyngsø, presented the contractual obligations and the financial situation in relation to the two EMHRN programs on Human Rights and Democratisation (freedom of association, justice, women's rights and gender, and human rights education and youth) and on Human Rights and Security of the Human Being (migration, human rights and the Middle East conflict, Economic and Social rights).

Nels Lyngsø, EMHRN Controller, showed the expenditures of the first half of 2006; he noted that some of the projects had been delayed and that he hoped that the EMHRN would be able to increase the spending in the second half of 2006.

Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that the budget for 2006 and 2007 amounted to 4,1 million euros and that the EMHRN has secured 3,2 million euros by now. The EMHRN is missing 0,9 million euros in the budget, however, the EMHRN has applied for funds at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the APRODEV amounting to a total of 0,7 million DKK. In addition, the EMHRN was to apply for funds at the Open Society Institute and Marc Schade-Poulsen felt quite confident that the EMHRN would manage to secure all the funds needed for 2006 and 2007.

Nels Lyngsø presented the expenditures in the first half of 2006. He noted some of the projects had been delayed but hopefully the expenditures would be increased in the second half of 2006. He also presented the expenditures foreseen for 2007. Nels Lyngsø also presented the loss and profit accounts stressing that the EMHRN would need a bigger equity (a least 200.000 euros) to make the EMHRN able to survive for at least 6 months on its own means.

Decisions:

- The EC agreed that the budgets are in good shape
- The EC decided that another budget line for fundraising should be added and consider employing a fundraiser
- The EC decided to adopt the principle of increasing the equity and to at least double the amount of 70.000 euros and try to reach 300.000 euros.

6. Conclusions of the General Assembly and policy debate on the EMHRN

a. Evaluation of the General Assembly

b. Discussion on the conclusions of the General Assembly (strategy, work plan)

Moderator: Eva Norström

a. Evaluation of the General Assembly

The EC members evaluated the General Assembly on May 12-14 2006. There was an overall agreement about the following points:

- The GA went well and the EC members are generally satisfied. Important to identify the components and elements of success in order to use them and to overcome all the many different issues that the EC has to deal with in the future: the physical layout and place was important, good timing and good chairing, and clear agendas. Good organisation.
- The EMHRN needs to evaluate the work of the workshops in order to integrate it in the future work
- Members: the GA contributed to a clearer picture of what the Network is about and to a clearer sense of ownership and engaging in networking among the members. Strengthened ownership is an asset that the EMHRN should continue to build on
- Election to the EC: need to be very clear about procedures, to try to recruit people even more pro-actively in order to ensure that there are more candidates than seats for the EC, to use the working groups as a platform for recruitment, and to make a final decision as to whether organisations having their membership ratified at the GA can run for the EC.
- Observers at GA: a good experience as it gave an opportunity for networking and even to solve issues, so the principles of having observers should be continued. Suggestion to have observers from Iraq and Yemen.
- Turkey: need to continue to work on Turkey and build on the previous work
- Handling critique: there has always been critique at GAs and always will be and it is rather a question of how to deal with it.
- Staff evaluation: should be taken seriously. The EC would like to be informed on the spot when staff is intimidated by participants, enabling them to deal with it.

Decisions:

- the EC approved the amendments of the strategy paper made following the GA
- the EC decided to discuss whether to have general statements at the GAs, and if decided, it should be inscribed in the Statutes and be well prepared
- The EC decided that the Secretariat should do its best to ensure good quality translations

Suggestions:

- It was suggested to have the GA every three year and to have a rotating membership of the EC where not all members are elected at the same time
- It was suggested to prolong the GA with an extra day to have all working groups meet or to discuss a cross cutting issue (which might also attract the media)
- It was suggested that a newly elected EC meets at “the back” of the GA
- Regarding Syria and especially the situation of the CDF: the EC decided to send a mission to Syria to meet with the different parties of the CDF, and to make a proposal before the next EC on how to solve the issue with the frozen membership of the CDF in the EMHRN

7. Gender mainstreaming in the work of the Executive Committee

Moderator: Moataz El Fegjery

EC member Rabéa Naciri made a presentation on gender mainstreaming (see document no. 17 distributed prior to the meeting). The aim was to make concrete suggestions for gender mainstreaming, a

measurable strategy to obtain gender equality. Rabéa Naciri came up with different proposals to the EMHRN, namely:

- Institutionalise gender mainstreaming in the different reference documents of the EMHRN
- Consolidate gender mainstreaming in all programmes, strategies, and activities
- Guarantee gender equality in all structures and activities
- Rethink gender in both a transversal or specific issue

Rabéa Naciri furthermore stressed 1. the need to keep a focus on gender and ask the following questions: Who is this project addressed to? Does this society consist of men and women? Are there specific problems /issues for women? And 2. the need to be explicit about the EMHRN approach and do what the EMHRN preaches.

The EC discussed how to integrate gender mainstreaming at all levels of the EMHRN work (EC, GA, working groups, EMHRN members) and make it visible. There were both viewpoints in favour of and against inscribing an obligation of gender mainstreaming on the members in the Statutes.

Decisions:

- A document on the EMHRN approach to gender mainstreaming and how to do it should be produced by the working group on gender and put forward to be adopted by the EC
- Gender mainstreaming shall be on the agenda of each working group meeting and the respective group shall make a proposal on how it will work on gender mainstreaming in its work
- A paper with the decisions of the EC on gender mainstreaming should be circulated to the EMHRN members
- The EMHRN shall inform the members that only women have applied for the gender working group and urging to have men to apply

Suggestions:

- Ask organisations who want to nominate candidates for the EC to nominate a man and a woman
- Engage in the Euro-Med Ministerial conference on gender in November 2006

8. Setting up the Executive Committee: Roles, responsibilities and functioning

Moderator: Rabéa Naciri

After a short introduction by Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, Eva Norström, introduced the work of the Vice president, in particular her role in the Troika and her work as the overall working group coordinator. Kamel Jendoubi then explained the role of the treasurer who is mainly responsible for assisting with fundraising, representation, and chairing sessions on economy and finances at the EC meetings. Finally, Marc Schade-Poulsen, EMHRN Executive director, presented the role of the political referents who oversee that the work of the working groups matches the Strategy of the EMHRN and in line with the objectives of the EMHRN. The political referents also assist the project coordinators on political issues.

After the presentation of the different roles within the EC, the EC agreed on the following distribution of responsibilities based on the EMHRN Action plan and Strategy:

Vice president
Treasurer

Eva Norström
Nizam Assaf

Political referents:
Freedom of Association

Birgit Lindsnæs

Justice	Michel Tubiana
Women	Rabéa Naciri
Human Rights Education and youth	Colm Regan
Migration	Maria De Donato (with Michel Tubiana until he has completed his current duties)
Economic and social rights	Iain Byrne
Palestine, Israel and Palestinians	Nina Atallah (to be confirmed)
ENP	Moataz El Fegjery
Reform and internal rules	Iain Byrne and Michel Tubiana
Other special (Iraq, Syria, Gulf countries)	Nizam Assaf
Turkey	Eva Norström
<u>Partnership:</u>	
Platform	Michel Tubiana
Foundation	Kamel Jendoubi
DK NGO Network	Birgit Lindsnæs
<u>Internal tasks:</u>	
Relation with the members and recruitment	Kamel Jendoubi
WG referent	Eva Norström
Communication	(decision postponed)
Training programs	Nizam Assaf

Decisions:

- Prepare a paper outlining the remaining responsibilities
- Postpone designating the remaining responsibilities until the next EC meeting
- Ask Nina Atallah if she agrees to be the political referent for the working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians
- Expand the Troika with the political referent for gender to contribute to ensuring gender mainstreaming of all activities

Suggestion:

- Make a paper to clarify what is meant by external communication, internal communication, presentation etc.

9. Dates for next EC meeting

Decisions:

- The EC decided to convene the next EC meeting on December 1-3 2006 in Jordan
- To have an extra day for a meeting of political referents and project coordinators to ensure synergies between the working groups
- The third EC meeting will be held on March 16-18 2007

10. 10th Anniversary of the EMHRN

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, suggested making a public event in 2007, for instance in Brussels, to mark the 10th anniversary of the EMHRN and at the same time have the working groups meet. EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, suggested launching 2007 as the year of anniversary and make all meetings part of it. Finally, EC member, Colm Regan, put forward the idea of making a 10 years review and have a number of key events held in different places. He proposed using the occasion of the summer school in 2007 and asking artists from the region to do some art work and make a poster.

Suggestion:

- Kamel Jendoubi concluded that he will make a proposal for the next EC meeting on how to celebrate the 10th anniversary.

24-08-2006