

-

EMHRN Executive Committee Meeting **Petra 1-3 December 2006**

Minutes
Approved

The EMHRN Executive Committee (EC) convened in Petra, Jordan, on December 1-3 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, the results of the EMP Ministerial Meeting in Tampere, the Istanbul conference on women, and the Civil Forum in Marrakech. Furthermore, the reports from the Secretariat and a suggestion for an Action plan on internal and external communication were presented, and different suggestions to partnership agreements were discussed. Finally, the EC agreed on a press release from their meeting.

In relation to the EC meeting, on December 4 2006, the Executive Committee members Kamel Jendoubi (President), Eva Norstroem (Vice President), Moataz El Fegjery and Nina Atallah, the EMHRN Executive Director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, and the EMHRN Project coordinator of the working group on women's rights and gender, Ruba Akkila, met with EMHRN member organisations in Jordan, i.e. the Sisterhood Is Global Institute and the Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies, with the Head of the EU delegation in Jordan, the National Center for Human Rights, and different friends and colleagues in Jordan to discuss the human rights situation in the Euro-Mediterranean, in particular in Jordan.



PARTICIPANTS

Participants from the EMHRN Executive Committee (EC):

Kamel Jendoubi (President), Eva Norstroem, Michel Tubiana, Maria De Donato, Birgit Lindsnæs, Nizam Assaf (Treasurer), Moataz El Fegjery, Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar, Nina Atallah, and Iain Byrne.

From the Secretariat:

Marc Schade-Poulsen (EMHRN Executive Director), Sandrine Grenier (Advocacy director, Brussels), Nels Lyngsø (Controller), Marc Degli Esposti (Communication officer) and Maibritt Damgaard Nielsen (Executive secretary, rapporteur).

Absent:

EC members: Rabéa Naciri and Colm Regan – both with notification.

DOCUMENTS FOR THE MEETING

Documents uploaded to the EC Forum on the EMHRN web site on November 17 and 24 2006 (in black):

1. **Agenda of meeting**
2. **Practical information**
3. **Minutes from Copenhagen meeting August 2006**
4. *Written/oral report from Kamel Jendoubi*
5. **Commission Communication on the Ministerial meeting in Tampere**
6. **EuroMed Civil Forum Declaration**
7. *EMHRN Draft Press Statement*
8. **Summary of NewsExchange since August EC meeting**
9. **Update on activities in the working group on Women's rights and gender**
10. *Financial reports*

11. List of members participating in working groups
12. Work plan until June 2007
13. Communication Action Plan
14. Newsletter and News bulletin
15. News bulletin template
16. Newsletter template
17. Danish law: individual and collective liabilities
18. Membership application from Damascus Centre
19. Brief about member issues
20. GA in Madrid
21. Report of Kamel from mission in Syria
22. Statutes with annotation (Michel Tubiana and Iain Byrne)
23. Draft Partnership agreement with the Aprove
24. Concept paper on Economic and Social Rights (Iain Byrne)

Documents presented at the meeting:

4. Written/oral report from Kamel Jendoubi
10. Financial report

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
2. Approval of minutes from last EC meeting on August 4-6 2006
3. Agreeing on the agenda
4. **Political Debate: Evaluating the human rights situation in the region. Elements to consider:**
 - a. The War in Lebanon and in Gaza
 - b. The EMP Ministerial Meeting in Tampere
 - c. The Istanbul conference on women
 - d. Progress and set-back in Arab reform programs
 - e. Development of the EU policies on Migration, Refugees and Security
 - f. The Civil Forum in Marrakech
 - g. Forum for the Future in Amman
5. Agreeing on a press statement
6. Reports from EMHRN Secretariat
7. Staff and administrative issues (including EC member responsibility)
8. Financial report
9. Working groups
10. Communication
11. Member issues: Membership applications and cancellations
12. Launching a process to revise the statutes

13. Urgencies

14. EuroMed NGO Platform

15. Partnership agreements:

- a. The Aprovev
- b. The FIDH

16. EMHRN's work on Economic and Social Rights



Day 1, December 1 (Friday)

1. Welcome (Moderator: Kamel Jendoubi)

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, and EMHRN Treasurer, Nizam Assaf, welcomed the Executive Committee members to Petra, in particular EC members, Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar and Nina Atallah who were not able to attend the first meeting of the EC in Copenhagen on August 4-6 2006.

2. Approval of minutes from last EC meeting in August 4-6 2006

Decisions:

The Executive Committee members went through the minutes from the last EC meeting and had the following observations and changes to the minutes:

- a. Nina Atallah is not from Gaza, but from Ramallah (page 4, English version)
- b. The EC withdrew the decision of asking the PIP WG to broaden its mandate to Lebanon and to analyze Israeli motivations and strategies. Discussions on this and similar matters will firstly be discussed within the EC.
- c. Regarding translations: It was not suggested, but decided that the secretariat should provide good translations in the three working languages (page 8, English version)
- d. The note taker was asked to add a couple of lines to the minutes about how the EC arrived to the distribution of roles and responsibilities of the EC members (i.e. stating the distribution of roles were based on action plan and strategy plan, etc.)

3. Agreeing on the 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.

Decisions:

- The agenda for the meeting was adopted unanimously by the EC members.
- EC members should be asked in time by the secretariat if they have points for the agenda

4. Political Debate: Evaluating the human rights situation in the region.

- a. The war in Lebanon and in Gaza
- b. The EMP Ministerial Meeting in Tampere
- c. The Istanbul conference on women
- d. Progress and set-back in Arab reform programs
- e. Development of the EU policies on Migration, Refugees and Security
- f. The Civil Forum in Marrakech
- g. Forum for the Future in Amman

a. The war in Lebanon and in Gaza

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, noted that it was not possible to measure the consequences of the war in Lebanon but that it was difficult to meet with civil society actors in an "after war context" during for instance the

Civil Forum in Marrakech where no Israeli organisations were present. According to Kamel Jendoubi the key to the situation in the region is the conflict between Israel and Palestine, but also the developments in Iraq have a huge impact on the situation in the region.

EC member Nina Atallah asked if there would be a follow-up on the joint EMHRN/FIDH fact finding mission to Gaza. EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the EC members that the working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians is currently working on a shadow report on the human rights situation in the occupied territory with indicators of progress and setbacks. However, there are no current plans of doing any follow-up on the mission that basically took place to show solidarity with EMHRN members.

Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar noted that the EMHRN solidarity mission to Lebanon in August 2006 (conducted jointly with the FIDH and the EuroMed NGO Platform) had an important impact in Lebanon and that the mission had made it possible to put the focus back on the human rights situation in Lebanon.

The EC members briefly discussed two statements issued by the EMHRN on the situation in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon during the war as well as the critical reactions, in particular from the EMHRN members, to them. Some of the critical voices said that the EMHRN was putting everybody on the same level and treated the sufferings as equal (first statement), that the EMHRN was entering politics and not balanced in its analysis (second statement). Kamel Jendoubi noted that it is important to look into where the Israeli member organisations draw the line between politics and human rights and he suggested inviting one or two experts to present the Israeli peace strategies. Michel Tubiana agreed to this suggestion and stressed the importance of staying objective and looking at the role of the EMHRN in the region.

b. The EMP Ministerial Meeting in Tampere

Marc Schade-Poulsen, EMHRN Executive director, informed the EC members about the main conclusions from the EMP Ministerial meeting in Tampere that were agreed by all partners and subscribed by all Arab governments. Among others he mentioned that the EU would install a democracy and reform facility and hold a conference on human rights and terrorism that is a key issue in the region. Finally, he noted that an action plan on gender had also been approved at the meeting.

Nina Atallah questioned whether the decisions from the meeting would be implemented in reality, especially in the Arab countries, taking into consideration what happened in Palestine after the result of the democratic election that took place in January 2006. The democratic countries didn't like the result politically, and impose sanction on the Palestinian people. Sandrine Grenier, EMHRN Advocacy director, agreed with Nina Atallah, however she noted that it was important to use the written documents to advance the EMHRN objectives (as done in relation to women's rights). She furthermore informed, that some themes had not been adopted by the Ministers, i.e. human security and elections and that the EMHRN should continue to work on these issues. EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, also questioned the follow-up on the statement but said that it might be possible to find some milestones in the statement that could help the EMHRN to launch some initiatives and campaigns.

c. The Istanbul conference on women

Kamel Jendoubi informed that the EMHRN had organised a self managed workshop on women's rights at the Civil Forum in Marrakech that had led to the suggestion of creating a network on women's rights which Kamel Jendoubi thought was positive. Furthermore, the EMHRN had finalised the update of the women's rights report that had an impact not only for human rights defenders. Finally, the EMHRN had tried to lobby towards the EU institutions and had reached important results in relation to women's rights at the meeting in Istanbul.

d. Progress and set-back in Arab reform programs

EC member, Michel Tubiana, noted that the region is facing increasingly many setbacks regarding reform; in particular as regards Iraq, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. According to Michel Tubiana, the threats are increasing and the international community, in particular the EU, is unable to respond to these increasing challenges and to put forward a clear policy.

e. Development of the EU policies on Migration, Refugees and Security

(no viewpoints were put forward on this issue)

f. Civil Forum in Marrakech

EC member Michel Tubiana mentioned that he had not seen any direct impact of the Civil Forum in the media and stressed the importance of discussing the EMHRN's relation with the Platform (see 14. The EuroMed NGO Platform)

g. Forum for the Future in Amman

Nizam Assaf, EMHRN Treasurer, informed the EC that the Amman Centre for Human Rights Studies had not participated in the Forum for the Future nor in a parallel Forum organised by different NGOs in Jordan. He suggested making a brief about the two meetings in a couple of weeks that could be circulated to the EC members. EC member, Moataz El Fegiery mentioned that the Forum for the Future in Amman was a true copy of the meeting in Bahrain where some participants were prevented from participating.

Day 2, December 2 (Saturday)

6. Reports from EMHRN Secretariat (Moderator: Nizam Assaf)

EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen, presented the EMHRN activities as described in the Management News Exchange (see document no. 8).

Marc Schade-Poulsen noted that the Secretariat is working hard to implement a new structure. As a part of this new structure, management meetings are held twice a month. The Management News Exchange is distributed to the management prior to the meetings, and to staff and EC members after the meetings. The management meetings are followed by a staff meeting in Copenhagen.

He informed the EC that a number of new staff members had been employed, i.e. Lars Zbinden Hansen as Administrative coordinator (Copenhagen), Marc Degli Esposti as Communication officer (Copenhagen), and Ruba Akkila as Project coordinator of the working group on women's rights and gender (Amman). At the same time, the Project coordinator of the working group on Human Rights Education and Youth, Line Gamrath Rasmussen, and the IT Coordinator, Ashraf Mikhail, will both leave the EMHRN on December 31 2006.

Furthermore, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the EC members that the EMHRN had started implementing the programme adapted at the General Assembly in May 2006 and that Marit Flø Jørgensen, Programme director, Eva Norström, EMHRN Vice president, and Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, had put a lot of efforts into selecting the members of the different EMHRN working groups. The working groups had now started working and Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the latest news from them;

Freedom of Association

The steering group had a meeting in August and is working on finalising indicators to be used for documenting the situation in the region. The EMHRN has received a grant from the EU Commission that will make it possible to make a report in the region (for 4 years).

Iain Byrne, EC member, stressed the importance of getting the indicators and the methodology right and of setting the right framework from the beginning.

Justice

The working group had a successful meeting in Casablanca in November.

Michel Tubiana added that the main purpose of the working group meeting was to deal with justice in Morocco taking into consideration the independence of the judges. The working group has made recommendations in relation to Morocco and they should be integrated in a general framework. He mentioned that Egyptian judges had suggested making a network of Arab judges which would be discussed at the coming working group meeting in Amman in January 2007. EC member Birgit Lindsnæs welcomed the idea.

Human Rights Education

In relation to the project on Human Right Education, a team had worked on documenting what the NGOs are doing on Human Rights Education in the region, however the report had to be redrafted. The working group on

Human Rights Education had a meeting in October 2006 and will meet again in February to plan the Summer school addressed to young people. The Summer school was supposed to be held in the Arab region for capacity building reasons but it was not possible after all due to the question of Israeli members' participation.

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, added that the main purpose of the Summer school was to target, attract and involve the youth due to the fact that a generation of Human rights defenders will disappear in a few years and that it is very important to create a new generation who can take up the torch.

EC members, Iain Byrne and Birgit Lindsnæs, thought it was unfortunate that the Summer school would not be held in the Arab region as scheduled. Moataz El Fegier explained that the organisations who host a summer school with Israeli participants in the Arab region could lose its support and constituency, and be attacked by the authorities and the media. Michel Tubiana and Kamel Jendoubi understood the problem of the organisations in the South that could be difficult to understand for the North but stressed the importance of working with the Israeli.

Women's rights and gender

The working group had not met yet but had instead focussed on the Ministerial meeting in Istanbul where the EMHRN made a difference and was noticed by the Finish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Palestine, Israel and Palestinians

The working group had not met as it has problems in raising the funds; however a working group meeting is scheduled for February.

Migration

The work of the working group is not as efficient and visible as the EMHRN had hoped but hopefully the meeting in Amman in December will give the working group a good start.

Maria De Donato noted that the focus had been on the report and she stressed the importance of having a clear strategy in relation to the work on migration.

Solidarity

A lot of the EC members participated in an EMHRN mission since the last EC meeting in August (Lebanon, Israel, Syria, and Tunisia). Eva Norström, EMHRN Vice president, was also supposed to go to Turkey in October but the mission was cancelled due to illness. However, she is planning on going in January 2007.

Education and training

The Austrian government is considering funding training in the region on European Neighbourhood Policy, and in 2007 the working group on women's rights and gender will do training in relation to gender.

Partnerships

a. Civil Forum

The EMHRN did a lot of work in relation to the Civil Forum in Marrakech and had a strong presence; the EMHRN co-organised two workshops on freedom of association and gender and involved members in work on peace and democracy (see also 14. EuroMed NGO Platform).

b. EuroMed Foundation:

The Foundation is working to have grant applications fit with its mandate. However, the Foundation is finding its specificity and has a promising future. The Foundation had a meeting in October where all board members volunteered to continue on the board.

c. The Danish NGO network

The network is dealing with the Arab region and has been run by EMHRN for two years. After the cartoon crisis, the newsletter of the Danish NGO network has occasionally been monitored closely by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for several reasons, among others security. Therefore, the EMHRN had a brainstorming meeting with other NGOs and made a suggestion to a new model for the newsletter. However, the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like the Danish organisation CKU to produce the newsletter in the future, and Marc Schade-Poulsen accepted their suggestion without objections.

d. *Aprodev* (protestant donors from Anglo-Saxon and German region)

The EMHRN and the *Aprodev* have drafted a partnership agreement that looks promising (see document no. 23, and 15. Partnership agreements below).

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

EMHRN Advocacy director, Sandrine Grenier, explained that the ENPI (Neighbourhood financial facility) will replace the MEDA programme; however it does not have a human rights clause as the MEDA. The EMHRN organised a seminar on the ENP in Lebanon and Cairo in 2006. After the seminar in Lebanon, the Lebanese NGOs created a working group, made recommendations and went on a lobbying tour to Brussels. The seminars on the ENP in Israel and Morocco would be based on the same model and aiming at implementing the action plan in the countries in question. Regarding Egypt, the work is frozen for the time being. She added that the EMHRN hope to be able to organise training on the ENP in Gaza and Israel. The Commission had told Sandrine Grenier that there might be a regional meeting on the ENP with the participation of NGOs.

Sandrine Grenier informed that the Brussels office has made three power point presentations to explain the ENP and the EU instruments and those were presented at the seminars in Egypt and Lebanon. Furthermore, the Brussels office is now finalising a guide in the three EMHRN working languages that will complete the presentations.

The EC welcomed the Management News Exchange that they found very useful and informative. They discussed the possibility of using the document in an edited external version for donors. Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, suggested sending a newsletter to the donors every sixth months to keep them updated on the EMHRN activities.

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, concluded the session by underlining the importance of living up to the expectations of the EMHRN members as the EMHRN is a tool for the members. In the future, the EMHRN should try to create new tools for the EMHRN members, create capacity of the members and seek cooperation with the EMHRN partners, for instance the FIDH, without duplicating work. Training as a tool for the members should be elaborated strongly, as with the ENP, as there is a need among the members.

Decision:

- After the presentation of the EMHRN activities, the Secretariat's activity report was adopted by the Executive Committee.

7. Staff and administrative issues (including EC member responsibility in relation to Danish law)

EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the EC that he had received the document on EC member responsibility late and suggested to postpone the discussion on the issue.

Marc Schade-Poulsen mentioned that the EC members who are the political referent for one of the EMHRN working groups should have been contacted by the working group coordinators by now. He noted that EC member Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar was not yet responsible for a specific area within the EMHRN (as he was not able to participate at the last EC meeting).

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, questioned how the EC members could be involved in the work, what the EMHRN expects of them, and how their participation could be increased. He noted that the political referent should be involved in the whole process and allocate time for the work of the EMHRN.

8. Financial report

The EMHRN Controller, Nels Lyngsø, presented the profit and loss accounts; the liquidity and the budget for 2006-2007 (see document no. 10). He noted that the annual report would normally be ready for the Quartet meeting on February 8 2007. Furthermore, he informed that he had been working on a new code of account that was presented during the staff development days in September and that would make it possible for the EMHRN to follow the different budgets closely.

a. Profit and loss accounts

Nels Lyngsø noted that the wages were almost at the same level as in the same period last year, and that there was more activity for the same wages. He added that the administration costs were close to 7% of the turnover and that the costs had increased a bit compared to last year due to the moving to new premises. Finally, he mentioned that the profit was 4000 Euros, the same as last year.

b. Liquidity

The EMHRN Controller, Nels Lyngsø, mentioned that the EMHRN had 350000 Euros in the bank which was low compared to last year, however the UNHCR would normally pay the EMHRN 100000 Euros in January 2007. The equity is 81682 Euros.

c. Budget 2006-2007

Nels Lyngsø presented the budget for 2006-2007 mentioning that there was an uncovered budget equal to 15% of the total budget. However, the EMHRN expect other funds as well. Nels Lyngsø had made a suggestion to cost reduction possibilities in case the EMHRN does not receive additional funds (see document 10). He however noted that none of the grants would continue after 2007.

Marc Schade-Poulsen added that possible funds from the consortium related to the Moroccan HR Action Plan and the possible funds from the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs have not been included in the budget. However, the EMHRN would have to do serious funding for activities after 2007.

EC member, Iain Byrne, informed that an initial meeting on fundraising had been held on December 1 and that it had been agreed that the EC members should be more engaged in fundraising. He furthermore noted that the EMHRN Controller, Nels Lyngsø, is managing a huge number of contracts and that it should be considered to get more capacity for the financial department. Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the EC that the EMHRN was working concretely on ensuring it.

Decision:

- The financial report was adopted and the EC agreed that a saving plan should be established for 2007

9. Working groups (Moderator: Nina Atallah)

Marc Schade-Poulsen explained that the point had been put on the agenda for the EC meeting as a meeting between the coordinators and the EC members was normally supposed to take place during the EC meeting in Petra, however the working groups had not got started yet and the meeting was postponed for the next EC meeting in March 16-18 2007. The EC members then had a preparatory discussion for the next EC meeting based on the overview of the working group members (see document no.11).

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, drew the EC members attention to the fact that the majority of the EMHRN members are working in the working groups and represented in at least 2 working groups. The list of working group members however also shows that a few associate members have registered for a working group. Kamel Jendoubi suggested considering how to attract these organisations and make them contribute more to the working groups.

Vice president and overall working group coordinator, Eva Norström, presented the background of the creation of working groups within the EMHRN as a basis for understanding (according to decision made at the last EC meeting in August 2006). Eva Norström informed the EC that the EMHRN had started early to form working groups, however in the beginning there were difficulties as to make them work and to get enough funds to make them continue their work. The only working groups that have worked almost continuously since the beginning are the working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians, and the working group on Human Rights Education and Youth.

A few years ago, the EMHRN had an evaluation made of its work, and in the report it was noted that one of the keys in the EMHRN was the work done through the working groups. The working groups build on a common culture and should have shared values, goals and common understanding of the work within the EMHRN. Eva Norström noted that within the working groups and between the different working groups, interaction, communication and discussions are important and should be ongoing. Furthermore, Eva Norström stressed the importance for the democracy within the working groups that the working groups make the decisions

–

themselves in order to keep the feeling of being partners in the working group. Finally, Eva Norström, informed the EC members that it had been decided that coordinators and political referents of the working groups should meet at least once a year to know how the work is proceeding and to create synergies between the groups. At the next EC meeting, there should be a meeting with the EC and the coordinators to formulate the strategies and the policies of the working groups. She stressed the importance of making these decisions together.

Kamel Jendoubi agreed with Eva Norström that the democratic decision should be taken by the working group but the final decision should be taken by the EC as the role of the EC is to monitor the consistency in all working groups. He suggested exploring the working methods of the working groups in depth. Birgit Lindsnæs agreed with Kamel Jendoubi and suggested that the EMHRN should make a policy paper on the working group methods. Michel Tubiana reminded the EC that it had already had the discussion about the working groups and decided that they are under the political responsibility of the EMHRN represented by the EC.

Moataz El Fegier raised the question of the working languages in the working groups and mentioned that a representative of the CIHRS had not been accepted in the PIP working group due to language. Marc Schade-Poulsen mentioned that due to financial reasons, the EMHRN would appreciate not adding a working language to the working group.

Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar asked about the procedures in relation to the selection of experts that work for the working groups. Marc Schade-Poulsen informed that the EMHRN does not have any procedure as regards the experts; however, he could imagine a procedure where the EC is consulted before hiring the experts.

10. Communication (Moderator: Nina Atallah)

The EMHRN Communication officer, Marc Degli Esposti, presented an Action plan on internal and external communication, including a suggestion to an acronym, i.e. euromedrights, to be used in English and French together with the logo as a brand (see document no. 13). The name of the EMHRN would not be changed and would still be translated into the three working languages of the EMHRN. Several of the EC members agreed to the idea of having a brand, whereas EC members Michel Tubiana, Nina Atallah, and Moataz El Fegier stressed the importance of expecting the three languages and not give predominance to one language.

Marc Degli Esposti suggested a compromise, i.e. to work on finding a brand for the next EMHRN General Assembly and in the meantime shorten the name to the Euromed Human Rights Network and Réseau Euromed des droits de l'Homme in the everyday communication, while keeping the name in Arabic as it is.

In relation to the media, the EC members discussed when to react and issue press releases. Marc Schade-Poulsen, EMHRN Executive director, noted that it had been an ongoing debate since the beginning of the EMHRN, and that it was difficult to make criteria in that respect. EC member Moataz El Fegier thought the EMHRN should have a faster response to the developments in the region and delegate this responsibility to one or two EC members. He suggested approaching the EMHRN members more often to get information and to circulate press releases. Furthermore, he suggested holding press conferences in the South and not only in Brussels.

Communication officer, Marc Degli Esposti, suggested reacting in relation to the main interests / core issues and activities of the EMHRN and not responding to all developments in the region. EC member Nina Atallah suggested focusing on the work and issues of the different EMHRN working groups in the press releases, and Iain Byrne agreed to her suggestion.

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, stressed the importance of having a budget for the communication, whereas Sandrine Grenier, EMHRN Advocacy director, stressed the importance of having a clear long-term media strategy and include the communication and lobbying component in all projects throughout the process. It should be clear who the EMHRN is targeting, and Sandrine Grenier suggested establishing a network of the media and the national members as well as a database with contact details of the media. EC member Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar agreed to her suggestions and added that it would be a good idea to have press conferences on a regular basis, for instance in relation to the EC meetings.

Decisions:

- The EC took note with interest of Marc Degli's draft paper on EMHRN communication
- On the brand and acronym of the EMHRN: The EC decided to shorten the name of the EMHRN in English and French in everyday communication to Euromed Human Rights Network and Réseau Euromed des droits de l'Homme while keeping the Arabic name as it is. Marc Degli Esposti will work on presenting three different drafts of a new logo/acronym and consult on these with members before an eventually new brand/logo is adopted.

11. Member issues: Membership applications and cancellations (Moderator: Eva Norstroem)

a. Damascus Centre for Human Rights Studies

Decision:

- The Damascus Centre for Human Rights Studies was adopted as a new member to be recommended to the General Assembly.

b. Beirut Bar Association

Marc Schade-Poulsen, EMHRN Executive director, presented a report regarding the membership of the Beirut Bar Association.

Decision:

- The Beirut Bar, Institute for Human Rights will receive a letter asking it to regularize its membership.

c. Centre de Prévention-Jeunesse Maghrébine

EMHRN Executive director, Marc Schade-Poulsen informed the Executive Committee members that the EMHRN had not had any contact with the organisation for many years and that it had not paid membership fees nor participated in any meetings.

Decision:

- Centre de Prévention - Jeunesse Maghrébine will receive a letter stating that the EC will recommend that their membership is ceased at the next GA.

d. The Situation of the CDF

The EC members briefly discussed the situation of the CDF.

Decision:

- The EC postponed the decision regarding CDF's membership until next EC meeting.

12. Launching a process to revise the statutes (Moderator: Iain Byrne)

Prior to the meeting, EC members Iain Byrne and Michel Tubiana had drafted a document that should launch the process of revising the EMHRN Statutes (see document no. 23). Michel Tubiana presented the document to the EC and asked them to raise technical questions before starting a debate at the next EC meeting. Michel Tubiana mentioned that the EMHRN is currently under Danish Law, which implies that everything that is decided should be in compliance with Danish law. He listed what he thought were the main issues to consider in the EMHRN Statutes, i.e.

a. Objective, Article. 2.2 does not have its place in the Statutes (a technical aspect).

b. Membership: who should be a member of the EMHRN? The EMHRN is considering individuals as members even though they do not have the right to vote. According to Michel Tubiana it raises a lot of difficulties, that some of the members do not have the right to vote.

c. Membership criteria; regarding the number of member organisations in each country, the Statutes are weak (a maximum of 3). Should the number of member organisations in each country stay limited to three? It is a question of credibility and finances, Michel Tubiana noted.

d. Mandate for the EC members; the EC is changed every two years; according to the decision taken by the GA in 2003, the EC members have a two year mandate that is only renewable twice (a maximum of 6 years). Regarding the President; those who have been EC member for four years can only be President for two years. Is there a possibility to go beyond the three two year mandate? Michel Tubiana was of the opinion that the mandate should be limited, however he also thought it was important to ensure continuity in the EC. Another question is who is elected for the EC, the organisation or the candidate?

e. Equal composition in the EC North-South; it is mentioned in the Statutes that there should be an equal composition of the EC in terms of North-South, however, the Statutes do not include information regarding the presidency in this respect and it could be envisaged that the presidency could change between the North and the South.

The EC contributed with different input to the launch of the discussion of the EMHRN Statutes, they asked Michel Tubiana and Iain Byrne to consider;

- If it would be possible to limit the membership in time?
- How the EMHRN could open the doors to new members?
- If it would be a good idea to elect a certain number of members at each general assembly (4 was suggested)?
- If it would be a good idea to have an unequal number in the EC (6 from the South, 6 from the North, and then the President)?
- If the President could be elected by the EC itself and not in a separate vote?
- If the mandate of the EMHRN should be limited to the EuroMed-Arab context or should the EMHRN be broadened (for instance relate the problems in the region to the UN system)?

Decision:

- The EC decided to create a standing committee on the statutes and launch a consultation process with members after next EC meeting. The next meeting will decide on political questions relevant for the statutes and a first revised draft of the statutes will be prepared for circulation

Day 3: December 3 (Sunday)

13. Urgencies (Moderator: Moataz El Fegjery)

a. statement (distributed on December 2)

The EC discussed what to include in the statement to be distributed after the meeting and decided not to make a general statement but focus on the situation in the region, the EMHRN position in relation to the conclusions from the Tampere meeting, the role of civil society, and the absence of the European Union.

Decision:

- The EC adopted a press statement drafted by EC member, Michel Tubiana (see www.euromedrights.net)

b. EMHRN 10th anniversary

EMHRN Communication officer, Marc Degli Esposti, presented different ideas for the celebration of the EMHRN 10th anniversary in 2007, i.e. to organise a meeting of the working groups in Brussels (day 1) and invite the media to speak with human rights experts (day 2). The budget of the working groups would be used to cover some of the expenses of the event. Furthermore, he suggested producing objects with the EMHRN logo, for instance an USB, and sending it to the EMHRN members.

The EC members discussed the different suggestions. EC members, Nina Atallah and Birgit Lindsnæs as well as EMHRN Advocacy director, Sandrine Grenier, stressed the importance of having a specific theme for the event in Brussels to attract the media, whereas Michel Tubiana and Iain Byrne noted that the celebration should be realistic in terms of finances and human resources. The importance of not excluding the EMHRN members from the celebration due to financial means was stressed by EC member, Iain Byrne, and EMHRN Advocacy director, Sandrine Grenier.

It was decided that a small committee composed by Marc Schade-Poulsen, Marc Degli Esposti, Sandrine Grenier and Nizam Assaf should work on a concrete proposal for the next day. The committee reported back on December 3 (see below).

Decisions:

- The EC agreed to the suggestions for the EMHRN 10th anniversary made by the committee and adopted a 10th anniversary plan as follows:
 - The EMHRN will publish a 10th anniversary program with a title approximately as follows: What would the region be without human rights?
 - The EMHRN will publish a folder describing the past ten years' achievements of the EMHRN
 - The EMHRN will take photos of all EMHRN working group members and ask them where they come from, what they do, why they joined human rights, and why they are members of the EMHRN. One photo will be put on the weekly news bulletin.
 - The EMHRN will produce a poster the end of the year made up of photos and texts of members
 - If possible, the EMHRN will make record a video messages from each working group meetings and pass the on to the next working group (on power point)
 - The EMHRN will organize a final event in Brussels in December: The EC will meet there and seek encounter with Barroso and other dignitaries. The EMHRN will invite the press to an event with five victims of human rights violations in the EuroMed region.

14. The EuroMed NGO Platform (Moderator: Moataz El Fegjery)

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, gave an historical overview of the EuroMed NGO Platform that the EMHRN has been involved in since the beginning.

15. Partnership agreements (Moderator: Birgit Lindsnæs)

a. The Aprovev

Marc Schade-Poulsen presented the Aprovev group (a protestant church based organisation) and the suggestion to a partnership agreement made by Aprovev and the EMHRN. He informed the EC that the EMHRN had got funding from several members of the Aprovev for the Review, and that the Aprovev is interested in building capacity of its partners in Israel and Palestine whereas the EMHRN is interested in having good contacts in the Aprovev countries. The suggested partnership agreement would not bind or limit the EMHRN in any way but facilitate the work of the EMHRN.

The EC discussed the suggestion to the partnership agreements in details, in particular the reference to the UN resolution no. 194 regarding the Palestinians right to return (see document no. 26, page 1), the "possibility of cooperating on a similar human rights review and lobbying activity covering the EU's relations with an Arab EuroMed country (preferably Tunisia)" (see document no. 26, page 2), and the fact that the Occupied territory was not included in the agreement.

There was an overall agreement that there should be a balance regarding the EU-Israel and EU-Occupied territories in the agreement, and that the agreement should not open up for the possibility of making a review on Tunisia in particular. Regarding the UN resolution no. 194, Moataz El Fegjery reminded the EC that in 2005, a background paper with a reference to the same UN resolution was approved by the EC (when Randa Siniara was the political referent of the working group on Palestine, Israel and Palestinians). It was suggested to verify the minutes from the EC meeting.

Decisions:

- Regarding the Strategic Partnership with the Aprovev the EC welcomed the proposal with the following remarks:
 - Marc Schade-Poulsen was asked to look into past minutes of EC minutes to see when/whether the EC adopted the PIP working group's concept paper including phrasing on the right to return according to UN resolution 194. It suggested that an alternative wording could be 'according to UN resolutions'.
 - The document should specify that the strategic partnership concerns EU association/interim agreements and ENP with Israel and the OPT
 - The document should delete last paragraph including reference to Tunisia and add a phrase instead opening up for future partnerships in other fields of work.

b. The FIDH

EMHRN President, Kamel Jendoubi, presented the idea of establishing a draft partnership agreement between the EMHRN and the FIDH. He noted that the FIDH was a well known organisation as it is an associate member of the EMHRN and has been involved in the EMHRN since its first GA. The EMHRN and the FIDH have a lot of things in common, such as members, values, objectives and activities in the same region. For a long time, the EMHRN had wanted to make a clear, flexible, formal and strategic framework for the cooperation for the FIDH and establish some rules of cooperation to complete instead of duplicate each others work. Kamel Jendoubi had been in contact with the Executive Director of the FIDH, Antoine Bernard, and they both agreed that it was time to launch the process of a cooperation agreement. Finally, he noted that the ideal scenario would be to reach an agreement with the FIDH before their congress in March 2007, and that the EMHRN should aim at making agreements with other organisations as well. The EC members supported the suggestion to a formalised cooperation agreement with the FIDH. Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar volunteered to help Kamel Jendoubi, Marc Schade-Poulsen, and Sandrine Grenier, to go forward with the process.

Decision:

- Regarding Partnership with the FIDH, the EC established an action group composed of Kamel Jendoubi, Wadih-Ange Al-Asmar, Marc Schade-Poulsen and Sandrine Grenier to work on an agreement with the FIDH before the FIDH congress in March 2007.

16. EMHRN's work on Economic and Social Rights (Moderator: Birgit Lindsnæs)

EC member, Iain Byrne, presented his document on Economic and Social Rights (document no. 25) and underlined that it was a point of departure. When writing the document, he had thought of the previous work done by the EMHRN, how the EMHRN could add value, and the question of how to actively engage the EMHRN members, give them capacity and knowledge. As an initial starting point he suggested to make a manual with focus and challenges in the region and map the issues to work on. One of the issues could be the right to water. The EMHRN should convince victims and governments that human rights are enforceable rights and that people can claim them.

Kamel Jendoubi, EMHRN President, thanked Iain Byrne for the document that could be a good framework for the objectives of the EMHRN work on Economic and Social Rights. He stressed the importance of finding the means for a working group on Economic, Social *and* Cultural rights, and suggested to organise training courses oriented towards human rights defenders on the ground. EC member, Nina Atallah, agreed with the suggestion of organising training courses; however she noted that the focus should be on building awareness in the society about the rights of the people, more than the training aspect itself.

EC member Michel Tubiana suggested identifying some specific areas within the Economic and Social rights that the EMHRN should focus on, and welcomed the idea of focusing on the right to water. Furthermore, he suggested using existing tools and cooperating with existing networks, for instance trade unions.

Executive director Marc Schade-Poulsen asked whether a WG on ecosoc rights should target current membership of the EMHRN or if the EMHRN should proactively seek to attract new members with track record in this matter.

Iain Byrne ended the session by saying that it would be necessary to do more mapping to get an overview of the activities within the Economic and Social rights. Furthermore, the EMHRN should be clear about its strategy for the work on Economic and Social rights and ensure the funds for the work. Finally, Iain Byrne mentioned that the strategy of training members and bring in experts should go in parallel, so the EMHRN and its members would benefit.

Decision:

- Regarding Iain Byrne's discussion paper on economic and social rights, Iain Byrne's approach was welcomed and he received many constructive comments (including avoiding duplication with other initiatives in the region). He was asked to integrate response to the comments in a second draft discussion paper to be discussed at the next EC meeting.