



**Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support  
to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF)**

# **Fourth Consultation of the Council of Representatives**

13 June 2015 - Brussels

*Minutes*

**[www.emhrf.org](http://www.emhrf.org)**

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# 1. Opening of the Fourth Consultation of the Council of Representatives by Driss El Yazami, EMHRF President

The President of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders, Driss El Yazami, opened the Fourth Consultation of the Council of Representatives in Brussels on June 13, 2015, by welcoming all the participants on behalf of the EMHRF Board.

Board members in attendance were Kamel Jendoubi and Souhayr Belhassen, as well as the members of the Secretariat Améline Jaskowiak, Rami Salhi, Samy Lendvai and Cilina Nasser (Programme Director's maternity cover). Apologies for their absence due to professional commitments were made on behalf of the Vice-President of the EMHRF, Christine M. Merkel, the Treasurer, Eskil Trolle, and the other Board members, Lynn Welchman, Leila Rhiwi, Hanny Megally, Khémaïs Chammari, Bahey Eldin Hassan and Bassma Kodmani.

The President recalled that the EMHRF was launched by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network in December 2004 after a study provided a needs assessment for the establishment of a human right foundation devoted to flexible and strategic small-scale funding in the South Mediterranean region.

## 2. Report on Activities and Finances for the Period 2012-2014

### 2.1 Major Activities Undertaken

To give an overview of major trends in the Foundation's activity over the period 2012-2014, Driss El Yazami's highlighted a number of elements:

- The number of requests received by the Foundation, 1139 applications, doubled compared to the previous period covering 2009 to end of 2011, and the Foundation's positive response rate stood at 25% with the number of interventions also doubling compared to 2009-2011.
- Syria remained a central focus for the Foundation for the period 2012-2014 with 45% of interventions focusing on the consequences of the conflict in Syria, including 92 individual defenders and various associations inside Syria or those abroad working on Syria.
- The Foundation also focused its work on Tunisia (21% of interventions) in the aftermath of the uprising because of the strong presence of emerging civil society organisations there and it particularly supported remote organisations having difficulties in accessing donors.
- Egypt and Libya represented 14% of the Foundation's interventions over the 2012-2014 period. But there was a sharp increase in 2014 due to the deteriorating human rights situation with Egypt accounting for 12% and Libya 6% of the Foundation's interventions.
- The themes that the Foundation's interventions focused on for the period 2012-2014 were civil and political rights, including combating impunity; women's rights and empowerment; economic, social and cultural rights; freedom of expression and the right to access information; minorities' rights; the rights of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- The Foundation increased its field presence, particularly in remote areas in Tunisia, and it visited Libya in 2012 and 2013. The Foundation also conducted regular visits to Egypt and Syria's neighbouring countries, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.
- The Foundation has played a mediating role between NGOs and donors, and it has also been developing a growing intermediation role, particularly in terms of strategies in response to the shrinking space for civil society in the region in general and in Egypt in particular.
- Although the mandate of the Foundation is primarily to provide financial support, the Board and the Secretariat are conscious of the need to go beyond. The philosophy of the Secretariat is to provide full accompanying measures to the grantees that go beyond the sole financial intervention.
- The Board noted that a greater effort is required in terms of training for the defenders, many of whom are today living in exile. The basic needs of the defenders in exile must be met but they

also need to learn how to interact with new environments. Such trainings go beyond the Foundation’s mandate, but it is willing to relay such needs to the relevant partners.

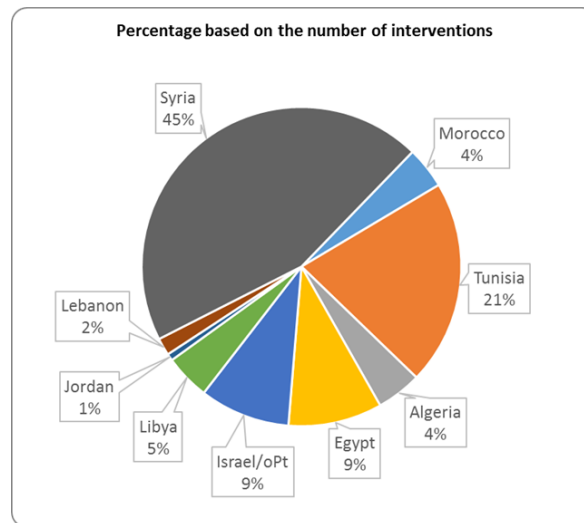
These elements demonstrate that the Foundation’s role has developed further during the period 2012-2014, with priority being given to responsiveness, complementarity and action at the community level.

The position adopted by the Foundation is a reflection of these emphasises, which were given tangible form in actions centred around the two poles described below – namely, direct and indirect support provided to defenders.

### 2.1.1. Direct Support to Human Rights NGOs, Groups and Defenders

The support the Foundation received from its main donors<sup>1</sup> made it possible for it to allocate direct financial support on 284 occasions, in the timeframes and with the flexibility needed, aimed at protecting and consolidating the work of **271 defenders** (specifically 117 individuals and 154 groups or NGOs)<sup>2</sup> in the South Mediterranean countries.

The total amount involved reached **€ 3,737,965.78<sup>3</sup>** during the period 2012-2014. The beneficiaries of those interventions were members of the civil society acting in Syria, Tunisia, the occupied Palestinian territories and Israel, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon and Libya. The Foundation gave special consideration to the **countries of the region where needs were deemed to be particularly important due to the context in which civil society operates**, with Syria, one of the Foundation’s priority countries of intervention, standing out.



<sup>1</sup> The EMHRF was able to undertake these actions during 2012-2014 thanks to the support of, inter alia, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Open Society Foundations (OSF), the Sigrid Rausing Trust, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a number of private funds.

<sup>2</sup> For information, the Foundation doubled its interventions compared to the period 2009-2011. Out of 1139 information and funding requests from human rights defenders that were received and processed by the staff of the EMHRF, 25% led to emergency or strategic interventions for the period under study. Most requests were submitted directly by defenders who had heard of the EMHRF by word of mouth (defenders, partners) or during visits, through members of the EMHRN or through the EMHRF website. About 5% of the final beneficiaries were members of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN).

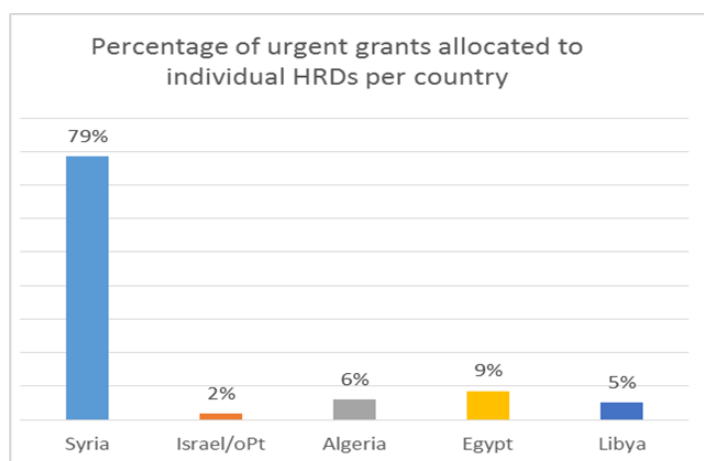
<sup>3</sup> Please note that the difference of EUR 12,069 between the total amount granted shown on the Summary of EMHRF Results 2012-2014 (EUR 3,725,897) and the Summary of EMHRF Actions 2012-2014 (EUR 3,737,966) is explained by a few liabilities cancelled in 2013 and 2014.

The support provided to defenders in the region can be divided into two broad categories, as set out below.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1.1.1. Urgent Interventions to Protect Defenders at Risk in Repressive and Volatile Contexts

In the course of 2012-2014, the Foundation granted urgent support to 117 individual defenders facing difficulties or risks as a result of their actions in support of democratisation and respect for human rights in the South Mediterranean region. These interventions were carried out by way of 115 secure electronic consultations with the applicants.<sup>5</sup>

As indicated in the chart below, the vast majority of these interventions were focused on the consequences of the escalation of the conflict in Syria:



In particular, the Foundation's actions targeted the following situations for emergency support:

- Sixty-four defenders (fifty-four Syrians, seven Libyans, two Palestinians and one Egyptian) and their families, who fled their country of residence because their lives were threatened as a result of their human rights work and faced grave economic difficulties, received support to **temporarily relocate abroad** and to allow them to continue their human rights work.
- Twenty-four defenders, from the Foundation's priority countries, facing constant harassment because of their position in favour of human rights received support to meet their basic needs in order to **relocate to safe places and/or protect their safety in the country**, enabling them to mitigate threats and pursue their human rights work.
- Ten defenders, who are residents of Algeria, Egypt and Syria, or their families, who suffered life-threatening health issues, were given assistance so they could seek **medical treatment and rehabilitation services**. The decisions to grant support were based on factors such as violations

<sup>4</sup> Two mechanisms have been established by the Foundation to provide flexible responses to the needs expressed by human rights defenders: an urgent-response mechanism, allowing the Board to make a decision on an application in the amount of € 5,000 (with a maximum 20 % overhead, i.e. € 6,000) within a maximum of 10 days, and a regular consultation mechanism employed at annual meetings of the Board, during which proposals amounting up to € 40,000 each are discussed.

<sup>5</sup> The Foundation maintains a policy of confidentiality regarding most of the information related to the beneficiaries of its funding. This policy has been adopted and implemented because of the serious risks to which the activities and persons applying for funding, the recipients of funds or other human rights defenders in the region could be exposed.

committed against the defenders' rights or their inability to afford the costs involved because of their on-going struggle in favour of human rights.

- The families of eight human rights defenders from the Foundation's priority countries, who are arbitrarily detained, prosecuted or abducted, received urgent support to meet their **basic needs** as they faced highly precarious conditions.

Since one of the main objectives of these interventions is to ensure that defenders facing difficulties or at risk can be supported over the medium and long term, the Foundation has sought to engage in coordinated actions with partners in order to ensure that a number of defenders and their relatives would receive effective support. More specifically:

- The Foundation coordinated its urgent interventions with several regional and international organisations to support forty-nine human rights defenders from Syria, Libya, Algeria and from countries elsewhere in the region. These interventions were part of their solidarity actions (campaigns, urgent appeals, press releases, trial-monitoring missions, meetings with officials and letters supporting asylum requests, etc.). In particular, the Foundation provided information about detained Syrian activists within the framework of the *Free Syria's Silenced Voices* campaign.<sup>6</sup> It also coordinated its urgent interventions aimed at supporting Libyan activists with a recently-established group of international NGOs to synchronize funds, and with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) to ensure their protection by the Tunisian authorities.
- The Foundation wrote letters to the UNHCR and various European states in support of ten Syrian defenders' applications for asylum and resettlement owing to the risks they continued to face in Syria's neighbouring countries.
- The Foundation ensured that eleven Syrian defenders would benefit from educational opportunities and trainings as well as possibilities of long-term support related to their field of work from national, regional and international actors, thus securing - at least in part - the sustainability of their work and personal situation in exile. It also wrote proposals exploring possibilities of longer-term protection for five human rights defenders at risk through protective fellowship opportunities. As a result, a fellowship opportunity was awarded to one Palestinian and one Syrian activist.
- The Foundation was instrumental in arranging for six international partners to cover the additional costs associated with the medical treatment and basic expenses of twelve Syrian, Algerian and Palestinian defenders as well as their families. In seven cases, the Foundation acted as an intermediary.
- The Foundation coordinated four of its urgent interventions with a rehabilitation centre in the region to ensure that Syrian human rights defenders who have been victims of recurrent direct threats, torture and other ill-treatment, receive appropriate medical and psychosocial support.

On the whole, the **outcome of the Foundation's emergency interventions** was encouraging:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The *Free Syria's Silenced Voices* campaign is co-sponsored by the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH), Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Front Line Defenders, Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN). See <http://free-syrian-voices.org/> for more information.

<sup>7</sup> All human rights defenders and NGOs acknowledged receipt of the funds in a timely manner. The urgent financial assistance provided by the Foundation did not increase security threats to the recipients, thanks to the confidentiality rules applied prior, during and after the transfer of the funds.

- Above all, the human rights defenders and their families supported, of whom 22% were women, were able to avoid increased risks to their personal security and threats against their lives.
- The interventions resulted in the improved wellbeing of seventy-six Syrian, Algerian, Libyan, Palestinian and other defenders who had experienced difficult conditions due to health issues, ongoing harassment or arbitrary legal proceedings.
  - Nine of the defenders, whose lives were at risk for health issues, were able to receive proper medical treatment in their country or abroad.
  - Fourteen human rights defenders were granted asylum and resettled in the United States of America and in Europe, especially in France, Sweden, Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom, on the basis of their profiles as human rights activists and the highly precarious conditions they continued to face in neighbouring countries.
  - Around 65% of the beneficiaries have been able to resume or continue their human rights work, notably those in neighbouring countries due to the assistance they received from the EMHRF, among other factors. Most of them used their new location as a base to monitor and advance the human rights situation in their home country. For instance a group of Libyan human rights defenders in temporary exile in Tunisia are currently developing a platform to represent their interests and influence the human rights agenda in Libya. Two Syrian activists have secured paid work with international NGOs in Gaziantep, a Syrian women’s rights activist has co-founded a children’s magazine that is distributed in Syria, and a fourth activist is planning to disseminate a documentary film that he has just completed. Another two defenders developed innovative media projects, which received international awards and sustainable support in 2013. A seventh activist, who developed a pilot project to train and employ people with disabilities won a competition organized by an international NGO named “Syrians in Diaspora.”
- The vast majority of the defenders who benefited from the Foundation’s interventions and who had been subjected to abuses or threats of abuses as a result of their human rights work, gave their testimonies to international human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Moreover, the Free Syria’s Silenced Voices campaign has called for the release of five Syrian activists who have benefited from the Foundation’s interventions either directly or through family members. These five activists are either in detention or abducted and held in an unknown location.

By the end of 2014, four activists from the Foundation’s priority countries continued to be either subjected to enforced disappearance, or their fate remained unknown after being abducted by a non-state armed group, or continued to be detained by government authorities in a known location. In the absence of the main breadwinner, their families may need renewed support in the future to meet their basic needs. Moreover, a number of other defenders continued to suffer from post-traumatic stress preventing them from resuming their human rights activities until a later date.

It is worth noting that important needs remain in the field of lasting educational opportunities, especially for Syrian and Libyan human rights defenders in exile, particularly in the areas of human rights, languages and management to help them consolidate their roles and work in the longer term.

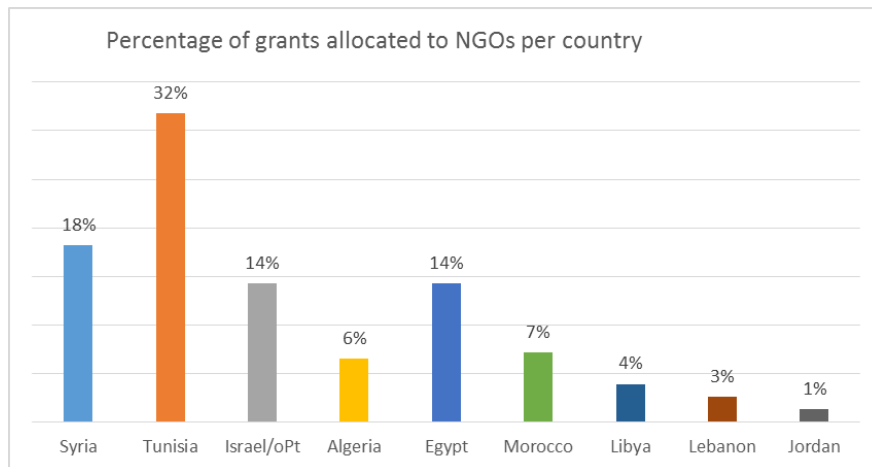


### 2.1.1.2. Flexible Interventions in Support of Emerging NGOs and Sensitive Projects in the Regional Context

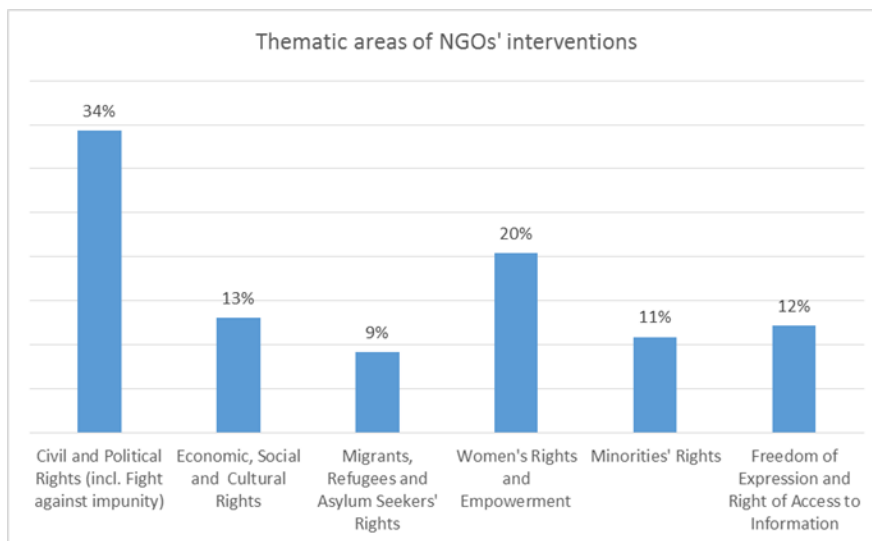
With a view to adapting to the different situations and dynamics at work in the region, the Foundation also allocated flexible support, *both on an urgent and regular basis*, to 154 human rights groups and NGOs that faced difficulties in securing funding or fell outside mainstream donors' categories. These interventions focused on the following situations:

- Leveraging 95 emerging innovative human rights initiatives in the face of rapidly changing developments;
- Reinforcing the capacities of 59 established human rights groups or NGOs by enabling them to boost their professionalization and sustain their work.

Note that 49% of the activities supported by the Foundation targeted remote areas in the countries appearing in the charts below in 2012-2014:



The following issues were given special consideration during this period:



In particular, the Foundation sought to respond to specific needs expressed by civil society actors in contexts in which events moved quickly and national dynamics differed from one country to another.

To simplify the presentation of the Foundation's activity, the priority areas of intervention in the following five contexts are presented:<sup>8</sup>

1. **Protracted Multifaceted War and Impunity for Mass Atrocities in Syria:** With the escalation in violence, increased militarisation and radicalisation of the war, the Foundation gave priority to reinforcing civil society efforts combatting impunity and mitigating sectarian polarisation; others providing crucial psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services to the afflicted population, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children, the disabled, internally displaced persons and refugees.
2. **Volatile Transition Contexts in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt:** Against a background of unstable political conditions associated with the lack of institutions guaranteeing basic rights and freedoms, the Foundation's interventions reacted to developments adversely affecting the human rights and the human rights defenders' movement at the local levels in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. In particular:
  - a. **Tunisia** has been able to make a relatively successful transition to democracy, thanks to the crucial role played by its civil society. In this context, the Foundation gave priority to leveraging and sustaining the activities of emerging civil society organisations (CSOs), especially those acting in remote and marginalised areas, to ensure constant mobilisation for respect of fundamental rights and an increased participation of women in the elections and ongoing reform processes, to fend off potential democratic setbacks.
  - b. The Foundation initiated work in **Libya** in 2012 where a number of interventions aimed at identifying and supporting emerging civil society initiatives addressing issues on citizenship, women's empowerment, and minorities' and migrants' rights. However, increasing acts of violence, abductions and assassinations targeting human rights defenders have led the Foundation to refocus its actions toward protecting individual defenders over the course of 2014. Given the numerous needs expressed by Libyan civil society actors that went beyond financial support, the Foundation supported rigorous discussions and meetings especially on the protection and sustainability of Libyan human rights defenders' work in the course of 2012-2014.
  - c. Due to a significant deterioration of the human rights situation and mounting arbitrary policies and practices that have developed targeting independent civil society, the Foundation strategically expanded its work on **Egypt** over the course of 2012-2014. Its interventions focused primarily on containing the damage sustained by the human rights movement in order to maintain the space for democratic freedoms. Its interventions also supported documentation of serious human rights violations, given the lack of independent investigations and accountability to address these violations.
3. **Stalemate of Impunity and Shrinking Civil Society Space in Algeria:** The Foundation's interventions mainly aimed to protect human rights activists and union leaders facing arbitrary criminal and administrative sanctions in a context in which political reforms were misused by the authorities to restrict the activities of independent civil society groups. The Foundation's

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<sup>8</sup> The annual activity reports 2012, 2013 and 2014, published on [EMHRF website](#), can provide further information about the specific objectives of the Foundation's interventions in these contexts.

interventions also helped to build capacity and ensure the sustainability of the human rights movement at the local and national levels.

4. **Enduring Threats facing Civil Society in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:** The 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict has compounded the pre-existing difficulties for NGOs to operate and obtain core funding for their human rights work, leading to severe consequences for the sustainability of the human rights movement in both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. This prompted the Foundation to focus its interventions on providing core bridging funding to NGOs working on protecting and advocating human rights and documenting, preventing and responding to key human rights violations facing the populations in the period from 2012 to the end of 2014.
5. **Challenges facing Civil Society in Morocco and Lebanon:** NGOs in these two countries faced difficulties in accessing core funding that would enable NGOs to expand and sustain their work, partly due to the lack of endogenous sources of financing. The Foundation therefore aimed its interventions at boosting the professionalization of NGOs and supporting experimental innovative projects that had no other available source of funding.

In its role as an intermediary and coach to the beneficiaries, the Foundation:

- Provided encouragement and assistance to many emerging groups and a number of established NGOs, especially those located in Syria, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Egypt, by developing tailored action plans and proposals. This would enable the Foundation, in consultation with other partners, to respond strategically to the needs of these newly formed groups and NGOs;
- Encouraged 84% of the beneficiary NGOs to establish or maintain contacts with other groups and institutions working in the same thematic areas at the local, national and regional levels. This aimed to enable these NGOs to share information and experiences, identify potentials for synergies and coordinated activities, and consequently benefit from non-financial support that would contribute to the impact and sustainability of their activities;
- Provided coaching to forty-six emerging civil society initiatives working in remote areas in Tunisia by offering strategic advice relevant to their work and to the democratic management of an association in cooperation with EMHRN's Regional Office in Tunisia;
- Coordinated its interventions and maintained close collaboration with the EMHRN's solidarity programmes in Algeria and Syria as well as the programme recently established on Egypt;
- Recommended emerging human rights NGOs from Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Algeria and Syria to attend civil society consultations organised by intergovernmental mechanisms, particularly the European Union and the United Nations so that they would raise their needs and concerns as well as be included in consultative and policy-related dialogue;
- Organised and took part in donors' consultative meetings focussing on supporting human rights work in Syria and Egypt in order to exchange information and strategies related to the donors' interventions in 2013 and 2014. Greater cooperation with these partners was conducive to avoid duplication of efforts, reinforce exchanges of information and discuss and coordinate strategies that can effectively support Syrian and Egyptian independent civil society actors over the short, medium and longer term;
- Facilitated exchange of contacts, acted as intermediary, forwarded a list of potential donors and/or helped in the submission of funding requests for 81 NGOs or 53% of beneficiary NGOs.

It is difficult to assess the exact impact of the Foundation's flexible interventions or to anticipate the institutional and societal changes they may lead to in the long term. Such impact is linked to the political will of a range of stakeholders both inside and outside the region.

Nonetheless, *some of the main outcomes of the Foundation's collaboration with its local partners* in the course of 2012-2014 can be highlighted:

- ***Reports analysing and documenting grave human rights violations were produced by NGOs working on Syria and Egypt.*** The reports on Syria covered human rights violations of internally displaced persons and refugees from Syria; stoning of women and other serious abuses committed by the Islamic State; and the Syrian government's use of barrel bombs in its air strikes on the northern city of Aleppo and its countryside. Two of the beneficiary NGOs became primary sources of information on human rights violations for the media, with quotes and mentions by news agencies, such as Reuters and Agence France Presse (AFP), newspapers, such as Le Monde, and other major audio-visual media outlets, such as CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya. In addition, their data were used in a statistical analysis of the documentation of killings in Syria, commissioned by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and released in early 2013.<sup>9</sup> The reports on Egypt investigated the unlawful killings in Port Said and Sinai from January to August 2013; covered sexual abuse of women in detention; reported violations facing Egyptian journalists on the anniversary of the Rabaa protest dispersal; and detailed the arbitrary detention and specific conditions facing Palestinian and Syrian refugees in Egypt.
- ***Secured legal aid and representation services in highly restrictive environments for over 700 prisoners of conscience (POCs) or possible POCs in priority countries, such as Syria and Algeria.*** The Foundation provided such support to many human rights and union activists, journalists and others targeted by the authorities for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, assembly or association. Those benefitting from the Foundation's support faced trial on charges under anti-terrorism laws or other loosely-worded penal code provisions, such as those punishing with imprisonment anyone carrying acts that threaten national security or harm the image of the state. Those benefitting from the Foundation's support included women and minors.
- ***Temporary refuge was provided for especially vulnerable Syrian displaced populations:*** Over the course of 2012-2014, the Foundation supported 350 internally displaced women, youths and children in Syria as well as refugees in Turkey. The beneficiaries were mainly human rights defenders and Palestinian refugees from Syria at risk who benefited from psychosocial support, and educational and cultural services, such as language courses, photography, poetry readings and film screenings. The Foundation also supported events involving debates about justice, equality, citizenship and human rights. Additionally, the Foundation supported activities benefitting 564 Syrian refugees located in urban areas in Jordan. They included individual and group sessions which addressed the refugees' legal, medical, psychosocial and educational rights in the country. In addition, a referral network comprising 20 NGOs in the greater Amman area was established to facilitate some of the refugees' needs, and two legal studies were conducted highlighting deficiencies in Jordan's parliamentary decision-making processes with respect to Syrian refugees' rights. These studies also assessed the legal compatibility of these processes in light of the broader international human rights conventions ratified by Jordan.
- In Algeria, ***an advocacy mission by civil society actors, supported by the Foundation, to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) headquarters contributed to Algeria's inclusion in the ILO review of the country's application of workers' protection standards.*** This represents a

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<sup>9</sup> Megan Price, Jeff Klingner and Patrick Ball, *Preliminary Statistical Analysis of Documentation of Killings in the Syrian Arab Republic*, Benetech Human Rights Program, 2 January 2013.

major breakthrough in terms of international pressure on Algeria to respect economic and social rights and to be held accountable for its recurrent arbitrary measures against independent unionists.

- In **Tunisia, forty-six emerging civil society actors supported by the Foundation**, 72% of whom work in remote regions, have become **significant contacts for the authorities** and other actors, and succeeded in creating awareness and mobilising and educating more than 50,000 citizens about democratic principles, values and basic rights, thus **consolidating the human rights movement**. Led by four major Tunisian civil society organisations, the civil society movement's activities resulted in the completion of the national political dialogue in 2013 and, in early 2014, the adoption of the Constitution that ensured some freedoms and human rights.
- In Israel, the legislative process of the **Praver-Begin Plan**, which human rights organisations say aims to forcibly displace up to 40,000 Bedouins in the Negev, was shelved in January 2014. This came after concerted efforts and civil resistance campaigns carried out by Israeli and Palestinian human rights NGOs in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories as well as at the international level. However, Israeli authorities continued to demolish Bedouin homes and since the plan has not been officially cancelled, it remains unclear if it is only temporarily postponed, leaving the Bedouin community exposed to forcible displacement. Moreover, an innovative media project carried out by an NGO beneficiary also in Israel reinforced the work of several human rights NGOs to promote respect for the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.
- Litigation efforts by an NGO supported by the Foundation in Israel have helped **to mitigate difficulties facing officially unrecognised interfaith and bi-national couples and families by the State of Israel**. The NGO has been able to issue Domestic Union Cards, which are identification cards entitling such couples to legal status and rights equal to recognized married couples, and these cards have been validated by the Family Court and are recognized in Israeli government institutions. These cards thus facilitated family unification, which constitutes a significant legal precedent in relation to family status. As a result, 4,100 families gained access to legal assistance, including 2,362 families who obtained Domestic Union Cards. Many Palestinian citizens of Israel with spouses from the occupied Palestinian territories as well as others, such as migrants, benefited from this card by being considered for or granted family unification in Israel.<sup>10</sup>
- **Five innovative web projects** have been launched with support from the Foundation, including a web-TV and two web-radios, to promote youth civic engagement and respect for freedom of expression in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. In addition, **scores of articles, photographs and media coverage** of and by initiatives supported by the Foundation, including in major international news outlets, **boosted coverage of key issues including Palestinians' right to return and the effects of war on Gaza in Israel**.
- Thirty-eight NGOs, affected by the shift in donors' priorities and/or serious difficulties in securing support for their core activities, received bridging support from the Foundation in Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. This support was key for these NGOs to avoid closure and continue their work. The support also allowed them to take action to **avoid financial asphyxia** in the medium term. It particularly enabled them to retain staff members with a view to maintaining professional leadership, seen as a prerequisite to ensuring the consolidation and sustainability of the civil society movement.
- The Foundation's **closer cooperation with international partners** allowed several of its beneficiaries to benefit from trainings and to cooperate with partners including: the EMHRN, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), the International Federation of Human

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<sup>10</sup> This precedent received significant [media coverage](#).

Rights Leagues (FIDH), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Foundations to Promote Open Society (OSF), the Sigrid Rausing Trust, Oxfam Novib, the European Endowment for Democracy (EED), the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Mama Cash, Hivos - Humanist Institute for Cooperation, the Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement (CCFD), the Fund for Global Human Rights, the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR), the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Canal France International, International Media Support (IMS) as well as foreign representations and the delegations of the European Union, among others.

However, Libyan, Egyptian and Syrian civil society partners have experienced significant difficulties and delays in implementing their activities due to the precarious political and security situations in their countries. The Foundation thus adopted a flexible approach accommodating the fact that actions supported may not be fully implemented on time and as initially agreed, taking into consideration alternative implementation plans.

Despite the positive achievements mentioned above, the long-term impact is unclear and depends on the policies adopted by EU states in relation to combatting terrorism, migration and asylum, as well as laws adopted by countries in the Southern Mediterranean affecting the role and work of human rights defenders.

### **2.1.2. Indirect Support to Human Rights NGOs, Groups and Defenders**

In addition to providing financial assistance, the Foundation took other steps to support human rights defenders — mainly by strengthening its presence at the local level and by meeting with regional and international funders involved in the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights.

The purpose of these activities was to assess the developments occurring in the region, measure the impact of the assistance provided and, where appropriate, consider additional support. These activities also resulted in strengthened partnerships with key actors whose focus is on supporting human rights defenders over the long term.

Two activities were devoted to achieving this goal in the course of 2012-2014, as set out below.

#### **2.1.2.1. Strengthened Presence in the Maghreb and Mashreq Regions**

The Foundation increased its activities in the Maghreb and Mashreq regions through its regional office in Tunisia and regular visits to Libya, Egypt and Syria's neighbouring countries in order to adapt more quickly to changing circumstances and to the needs of local defenders over the course of 2012-2014.

## **1. Maghreb: Reinforced Presence in Tunisia and Renewed Visits to Libya**

The Maghreb mission of the Foundation, located in **Tunisia**, organised field visits to the remote Tunisian cities and governorates of Thala, Kasserine, Remada, Menzel Bouzayen, Sidi Bouzid, Ras Jdir, Dhiba, Zarzis, Tataouine, Siliana, Le Kef, Djerba, Sfax, Cap Bon, Jendouba, Béja, Gafsa and the Southern mining area in the course of 2012-2014. These visits have enabled the Foundation to carry out exploratory work, discuss the problems experienced in these isolated regions and to pinpoint emerging associations with strong potential in order to identify their needs for development and assistance. Moreover, these visits have allowed the Foundation to follow up closely on the developments of the emerging associations' actions, advise them on possible collaborations, defining projects and the democratic management of NGOs.

As a result of its reinforced presence in the country, the Foundation was able to support and coach forty-six emerging associations over the course of 2012-2014, in partnership with the EMHRN Regional Office in Tunisia. These interventions helped not only to safeguard, at least in part, the gains in terms of human rights and democratization of the January 2011 revolution, but also to deflect the possibility of a setback by ensuring constant mobilisation in favour of human rights and basic freedoms. The Foundation has become an important actor in the civil society landscape and a reference for many international actors operating in Tunisia because of its analysis of local developments and the needs of civil society actors, as well as the partnerships it has been able to develop between local, national, regional and international actors to promote and defend human rights in the country.

The Foundation conducted bi-annual field visits to **Libya** (Tripoli and Benghazi) in 2012-2013 that aimed to deepen its understanding of the various dynamics within Libyan civil society following the February 17 revolution, listening to different emerging actors involved in associations and identifying potential partners to explore the mechanisms and resources necessary for their development. As a result of these visits, the Foundation's mission enjoyed more visibility within Libya's civil society and among various national and international actors. Six emerging and promising NGOs have been able to receive both direct and indirect support from the Foundation to leverage and strengthen their innovative actions aimed at promoting respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, especially women rights, migrants and refugees' rights, and minorities' rights.

The Foundation was unable to conduct field visits to Libya in 2014 due to the worsening security situation across the country. However, it continued to follow up on the increasing threats facing human rights defenders and the sustainability of the Libyan civil society movement with concern. Consequently, in partnership with the EMHRN it decided to organise a seminar on '*Protecting and Strengthening Libyan Civil Society to Promote Respect for Human Rights*' in Tunis on 28-29 April 2014. This seminar hosted 20 Libyan civil society representatives and 10 representatives of international organisations active on or in Libya. Its main discussion points included developments in the country during the previous three years, their effect on the human rights situation, and their impact on civil society dynamics and needs, with a view to addressing such needs in a concerted manner. One of the specific needs identified by the Libyan civil society was the reinforcement of its protection by activating regional and international solidarity appeals as well as accessing international protection mechanisms. Participants also identified the need to build civil society capacities in relation to various methodologies<sup>11</sup> and specific issues<sup>12</sup>; to access geographically-balanced funding opportunities (that include core expenses, respond to Libyan civil

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<sup>11</sup> How to document violations, how to create an observatory of human rights violations, basic advocacy strategies, etc.

<sup>12</sup> Basic notions on human rights, transitional justice, CEDAW, application of international conventions, etc.



society needs, and are available in Arabic); and to strengthen their networks with international and other Arab NGOs, including in neighbouring countries.<sup>13</sup>

## **2. Mashreq: Renewed Field Visits to Egypt and Syria's Neighbouring Countries.**

The Foundation has not established a physical presence in the Mashreq region because of worsening security conditions. It conducted several field visits to Egypt and Syria's neighbouring countries in 2013 and 2014 to address the fast-changing developments and the deteriorating conditions facing Syrian and Egyptian civil society actors. The objective of these visits was to deepen the understanding of civil society dynamics in these countries to consolidate support and cooperation.

During its frequent visits to **Egypt** in the course of 2013-2014, the Foundation met with thirty human rights NGOs, activists, emerging groups, representatives of INGOs and diplomatic missions. The following brief points denote some of the observations that emerged from these visits:

- Since June 30, 2014, anticipation has been rising for a crackdown on human rights NGOs similar to the ongoing crackdown on journalists, youth activists, peaceful protestors, and political opponents. However, NGOs have expressed various scenarios with regards to the timing and severity of such a possible crackdown and have set up plans to consolidate the existing structures and legal support efforts to counter any possible crackdown and defend those subjected to arbitrary arrest or other repressive measures.
- While many Egyptian human rights NGOs resorted to silence as a strategic choice to avert a severe backlash from the authorities, a number of NGOs favoured political stances over the universality of human rights principles. These differences amongst the Egyptian NGOs amplified the vulnerabilities of the independent human rights movement.
- Serious human rights violations are committed across the country without any impartial investigations being carried out by the authorities. In addition, there is a rise in hate rhetoric and incitement to violence, smear campaigns against human rights NGOs and defenders in the media, with very few media outlets providing balanced reporting on events in the country.

In view of these developments, the Foundation has decided to focus its support actions on containing the damage sustained by the human rights movement in order to protect NGOs and maintain the space for democratic freedoms. Its support actions will also focus on the documentation of human rights violations committed by all parties.

On Syria, the Foundation conducted visits to **Syria's neighbouring countries** in December 2013 and June 2014. On these occasions, the Foundation met with around forty Syrian NGOs, activists, representatives of regional and international institutions, and foreign delegations in order to assess civil society dynamics, gaps, opportunities and caveats in terms of support actions. These visits especially underlined the following elements:

- Because of their efforts to document the massive human rights abuses and to provide assistance to the civilian population, defenders and groups working in Syria continue to face significant threats from various parties to the conflict depending on which party controls the area where these human rights defenders and groups are operating. In addition to direct threats, they also

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<sup>13</sup> For further information about specific recommendations made at the meeting, please contact the EMHRF Secretariat.



have to contend with increased indirect risks related to their monitoring of the various human rights abuses. Constant subjection to such threats has often caused symptoms of post-traumatic stress, consequently impacting on the well-being of human rights defenders and the sustainability of their actions in Syria.

- Syria's "associative" landscape remains volatile, as many advocates and activists have been either forced to flee the country or are detained, including those subjected to enforced disappearance by government authorities, or abducted by non-state armed groups. There is only a small number of experienced human rights activists still operating from inside Syria as well as newly established groups, including those operating clandestinely. While the need for them to monitor the massive and widespread human rights abuses remains huge, these activists and groups are struggling to ensure their own safety, build their capacities, access funding and remove barriers preventing them from associating.

The Foundation decided to focus its support actions on the protection of defenders; combatting impunity and mitigating sectarian polarisation; providing psychosocial, legal, administrative and knowledge-based services to the afflicted Syrian population, especially vulnerable groups. In particular, priority was given to support associative actors often working without legal cover inside Syria.

### 2.1.2.2. Reinforced Cooperation with Networks of Regional and International Foundations

As part of its activities aimed at strengthening cooperation to ensure long-term and sustainable support to human rights defenders, the Foundation took an active role in meetings with regional and international foundations involved in human rights issues, especially within the Ariadne European Human Rights Funders' Network<sup>14</sup> and the International Human Rights Funders Group.<sup>15</sup>

The main purpose of the Foundation's membership and participation in these networks was to discuss developments occurring in the region and how these affect local human rights actors, as well as the role that the donor community could play in supporting these actors in an environment where high hopes coexist with political instability and an uncertain outlook for the future. In particular, the Foundation worked to strengthen the participation of local activists to address the donors' strategies on the region and to strategically respond to the shrinking space for civil society in the region in general and in Egypt in particular.

**Local Activists addressing Donors' Circles and Agendas** - On the occasion of the semi-annual conferences organised by the International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG) in 2012-2013, the Foundation organised discussions focusing on countries in transition and Syria within the framework of the IHRFG Working Group on *Human Rights Defenders*.<sup>16</sup> In particular, it co-organised sessions, telebriefings and a learning institute entitled "*On the Front Lines: Protecting Human Rights Defenders in Times of Transition*" and "*Security of Human Rights Defenders: Supporting Grantee Safety*" in which six

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<sup>14</sup> Ariadne is a peer-to-peer network of more than 400 grant-makers and funders across Europe, who support human rights and social change projects worldwide. The Foundation became a member of Ariadne in 2011.

<sup>15</sup> The International Human Rights Funders Group (IHRFG) is a network of international foundations which currently has more than 650 members representing approximately 275 organisations that provide human rights-related grants around the world. The Foundation became a member of IHRFG in 2010 and it is a co-founder and member of IHRFG working group on human rights defenders, established in 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Co-leaders of the working group include the EMHRF, the Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR), the Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF), Wellsprings Advisors, and the American Jewish World Service (AJWS).

local activists from the Arab region were invited by the Foundation to address around one hundred private international foundations present.

In periods of social and political transformation, some changes can lead to major democratic advances while others demonstrate the continued ability of regimes to resist reform. In all cases, the work of human rights defenders is paramount to ensuring the protection of rights and real democratic change. The sessions featured a comparison of how changing contexts in different settings (Tunisia, Egypt and Syria) affect the work of on-the-ground rights defenders, and discussions examined different pro-active models to support and protect rights defenders as agents of sustainable change, such as urgent and flexible funding for prevention and emergency response, advocacy and policy work, and regional hubs, among others. The activists highlighted the importance of developing strategies to support human rights defenders working within rapidly changing political contexts and faced with major challenges in creating a lasting legal framework that will reverse years of repression and protect and support human rights defenders and civil society. They also explored human rights priorities, gaps, opportunities and entry points for funders. On the whole, these sessions were very well received by both human rights defenders and funders attending and a number of recommendations were further reviewed on the occasions of follow-up meetings.

**Foundations addressing the Shrinking Space for Civil Society** - The Foundation actively took part in discussions aimed at considering collective actions that foundations could undertake to address the global rising trend of shrinking space for civil society on the occasion of the Annual Policy Briefing of the Ariadne Network of European Human Rights Funders. In particular, the Foundation became a member in the steering committee of a working group on "*Cross-Border Philanthropy*", established in 2014.

The members of the working group agreed on a number of priorities for future collective work among INGOs and international foundations, in particular:

- Ensuring that key actors across the development, humanitarian and human rights fields jointly pursue indicators and commitments to civil society as part of the post-2015 sustainable development goals;
- Developing strategies in the business and human rights sphere to hold the corporations who benefit from the shrinking space to account;
- Countering the impact of counter terrorism legislations and policies on civil society;
- Strengthening and diversifying counter-narratives around civil society space and value, and the long-term security and building resilience of defenders and NGOs;
- Developing approaches to help bridge international norm setting with domestic legal reform initiatives;
- Advocating for a strengthened diplomatic response to civil society pushback;
- Enabling peer-to-peer exchange and learning between domestic civil society actors and supporting coordinated national level and regional responses.

Moreover, due to serious fears of an imminent crackdown on the main Egyptian human rights organisations, the Foundation organised - jointly with the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) - a consultation meeting with donors and private foundations on Egypt in Brussels in late 2014. This meeting, attended by representatives of 18 private foundations, institutional donors, diplomatic representatives and civil society organisations, aimed to explore potential means of enabling Egyptian NGOs and defenders to maintain a certain level of activity despite the drastic shrinking space for freedoms in the country. On this occasion, the participants expressed particular concern about the

constant intimidation by state authorities of independent Egyptian human rights NGOs and their international partners. They stressed the need to continue supporting the human rights movement, by all available means. Above all, they emphasized the absolute necessity to increase the pressure on the Egyptian authorities to prevent, or at least delay, the crackdown and stressed that this should remain the main priority for all actors.<sup>17</sup>

Recommendations were therefore made to review ongoing activities carried out by human rights defenders in light of the repressive measures put in place by the Egyptian authorities; and to set up a strategic and targeted international advocacy campaign aimed at increasing pressure on the authorities to support the role and work of human rights defenders at risk.

## 2.2 Overview of Financial Implications

In submitting the annual financial statements for discussion, Driss El Yazami emphasised that the global budget of the Foundation has reflected the rising needs expressed by the region's activists.

The Foundation's growing activity for the period 2012-2014 amounted to EUR 5,406,299 with 76% directly allocated to activities and 24% to human resources and administration. As a reference, the budget for the previous period covering 2009-2011 amounted to EUR 2,539,740 of which 70% were allocated to activities.

The Foundation's policy to diversify its financial resources continued over the period 2012-2014 and increased to 12 funders and donors compared to 9 during the previous period. Scandinavian countries were commended for supporting the local civil society movement in general and the Foundation in particular since its inception, adding that the funding came from five bilateral donors, notably Sweden, Denmark, Norway, France, Canada; one multilateral donor, the EIDHR; and three private donors, Open Society Foundations, Sigrid Rausing Trust and Oxfam-Novib.

Concerns over the increased restrictions on foreign funding in the region were voiced, particularly in Egypt, where a hostile environment to foreign funding can be found comparable to when the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1998, affirmed the right of defenders to receive resources, including foreign funding, for the purpose of protecting human rights, and when 13 countries campaigned against it arguing that foreign funding should remain under strict surveillance.

The table below, summarising the annual statements for 2012, 2013 and 2014 as audited by Deloitte, auditors of the Foundation, was submitted to the Council of Representatives.

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<sup>17</sup> For further information about specific recommendations made at the meeting, please contact the EMHRF Secretariat.

**ANNUAL REPORTS 2012-2014 (in EUR)\***

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FOUNDATION OF SUPPORT TO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

<b>Income</b>	<b>2014</b>		<b>2013</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2012-2014</b>	
<b>Subsidies</b>								
Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	456.701	23%	570.433	32%	548.434	35%	1.575.568	29%
European Union (EIDHR)	392.014	19%	389.124	21%	298.922	19%	1.080.060	20%
European Union (IFS)	0	0%	-2.286	0%	44.573	3%	42.287	1%
European Union (External Actions)	5.400	0%	16.000	1%	26.000	2%	47.400	1%
Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DAPP)	268.456	13%	201.342	11%	320.659	20%	790.457	15%
French Ministry of Foreign Affairs	40.000	2%	40.000	2%	25.000	2%	105.000	2%
Open Society Foundations (OSF)	251.599	12%	209.908	12%	171.721	11%	633.228	12%
Sigrid Rausing Trust	267.708	13%	93.156	5%	138.151	9%	499.015	9%
FIDH/OMCT	0	0%	5.793	0%	1.500	0%	7.293	0%
Private funds in Denmark	0	0%	0	0%	3.356	0%	3.356	0%
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	151.376	8%	127.618	7%	0	0%	278.994	5%
Oxfam Novib	162.607	8%	137.393	8%	0	0%	300.000	6%
Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade	1.826	0%	19.049	1%	0	0%	20.875	0%
Contribution, other	100	0%	0	0%	0	0%	100	0%
Support granted from provisions	20.000	1%	3.211	0%	0	0%	23.211	0%
<b>Total Subsidies taken to income</b>	<b>2.017.787</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.810.741</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.578.315</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.406.843</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Expenses</b>								
<b>Actions in Support of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs)</b>								
Emergency support to HRDs	357.237	18%	189.268	10%	216.306	14%	762.811	14%
Flexible and Strategic support to HRDs	1.047.069	52%	1.074.341	59%	841.676	53%	2.963.086	55%
Follow up on the situation of HRDs	25.435	1%	8.105	0%	7.631	0%	41.171	1%
Board meetings	47.519	2%	52.971	3%	33.850	2%	134.340	2%
Meetings with partners and fundraising	17.921	1%	34.968	2%	27.092	2%	79.981	1%
Consultation of the Council of Representatives	0	0%	0	0%	35.127	2%	35.127	1%
<b>Sub-total Actions in Support of Human Rights Defenders</b>	<b>1.495.181</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>1.359.653</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>1.161.682</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>4.016.516</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Other Services related to the activities</b>								
Membership fees to Foundations' Networks	1.739	0%	2.651	0%	1.835	0%	6.225	0%
Temporary Consultation/Researchers contribution	454	0%	0	0%	0	0%	454	0%
Translations	16.842	1%	35.255	2%	36.839	2%	88.936	2%
Information, Publication	1.865	0%	559	0%	580	0%	3.004	0%
External evaluation	0	0%	24.517	1%	10.898	1%	35.415	1%
<b>Sub-total Other Services related to the activities</b>	<b>20.900</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>62.981</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>50.152</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>134.033</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Staff wages</b>								
Activities staff	225.956	11%	162.747	9%	157.704	10%	546.407	10%
Administrative staff	142.270	7%	96.496	5%	114.456	7%	353.222	7%
Social charges	3.624	0%	2.184	0%	2.212	0%	8.020	0%
<b>Sub-total Staff wages</b>	<b>371.850</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>261.427</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>274.372</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>907.649</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Administrative expenses</b>								
Audit	17.312	1%	16.628	1%	12.656	1%	46.596	1%
Maintenance of a secure forum and website	2.517	0%	5.734	0%	5.893	0%	14.143	0%
IT Support	6.270	0%	10.165	1%	0	0%	16.435	0%
Rent	28.921	1%	53.444	3%	23.322	1%	105.686	2%
Office expenses and stationary	25.736	1%	21.137	1%	26.425	2%	73.298	1%
Bank and Transfer fees	18.459	1%	4.856	0%	7.659	0%	30.974	1%
Staff development	0	0%	1.721	0%	3.558	0%	5.279	0%
Depreciations	0	0%	1.402	0%	1.402	0%	2.804	0%
Navision 2013 - Financial Software	8.528	0%	0	0%	0	0%	8.528	0%
Others	25.078	1%	8.551	0%	7.957	1%	41.586	1%
<b>Sub-total Administrative expenses</b>	<b>132.821</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>123.637</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>88.870</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>345.328</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Financial items</b>								
Financial income and expenses	3.065	0%	-2.939	0%	-2.898	0%	-2.772	0%
Tax	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Sub-total Financial items</b>	<b>3.065</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>-2.939</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>-2.898</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>-2.772</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2.017.687</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.810.637</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1.577.974</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5.406.299</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Operating Profit</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>545</b>	<b>0%</b>

### 3. Discussion of the Activities, the Finances and Future Orientations with the Council of Representatives

Following these presentations, the Board opened the discussion with the Council of Representatives on the Foundation's main activities, its finances and future orientations.

*Several representatives – in particular from Syria and Libya – wanted to express their deep appreciation and gratitude for the work done by the Foundation in recent years. They notably emphasised the Foundation's uniqueness and the efficiency of its actions by recalling the reality of the situation on the ground in their respective country.*

*Most of Libyan HRDs who cannot stay in the country due to life-threatening situations have migrated to Tunisia from where some have received support from the Foundation and few other funders. Their needs go beyond the basic needs' coverage and donors should look more broadly at the survival and sustainability of the Libyan HRD movement. HRDs need to remain active outside the country, enabling them to build their skills and keep in touch with their NGOs in Libya. This kind of assistance is of paramount importance for the Libyan HRDs.*

*There is an attempt in Syria to shape a new civil society that would be in line with the political agenda of some donors. Most HRDs however do not want to play this game as it carries a clear political agenda. In addition funds do not always support the civil society. Funders and partners should support those inside Syria resisting this trend.*

**The main comments made and questions raised by the representatives are summarised below.**

#### 3.1 Continuity and Sustainability of the Foundation's Action

To questions raised about the continuity and the sustainability of the Foundation's action, the Board answered that it is based on several variables:

- The Foundation has an extended knowledge of and connections with the ground. The work of the Foundation goes beyond the administrative management of files. It is a question of knowledge of the local actors and local realities, which requires openness and great listening capacities;
- The Foundation's small size makes it flexible and adaptable. It has controlled its growth over the years, avoiding becoming too bureaucratic or inefficient. Meanwhile, the small grants it has allocated have had a colossal impact in the region;
- Given the recurrent funding difficulties facing defenders and civil society actors in the region, the Foundation also acts as a bridge towards other funders and partners. However, there remain many needs uncovered (approximately 25% of the requests received were allocated support over the course of 2012-2014). Beyond its mandate, a strategic reflection should be carried on lasting funding and training needs to be effectively addressed in the region, to which the Foundation could participate in and enrich.

### 3.2 Relationship between the EMHRN and the EMHRF

The Foundation was initially created by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and it holds regular conversations and meetings with its members and staff, located in the same offices. However, only 5% of the Foundation's beneficiaries are Network's members because EMHRN members are often well established and experienced structures, which receive funding from mainstream donors. Therefore, they do not need the EMHRF as much as smaller and emerging NGOs. The Foundation has been innovative in finding new activism outside of the EMHRN while linking it to the EMHRN members.

These are especially young actors, usually located outside of capital cities. They are not easily identifiable and usually turn first to the EMHRF for financial support. The Foundation thus acts as a compass for these new actors. The EMHRN members benefit from opening to these new actors who reinforce the human rights movement, and bring on innovation.

The relationship between the EMHRF and the EMHRN is evolving, and there is still room for more exchanges on how to systematize the good practices that have been implemented, taking for example the excellent cooperation on and with the Tunisian office.

### 3.3 Foundation's Selection Criteria and Mechanism

The Foundation's selection criteria and the description of its mechanism can be found on its website: <http://www.emhrf.org/>.

The definition of its human rights defenders' beneficiaries was purposely kept wide-ranging to provide a flexible frame to the action of the Foundation in the South-Mediterranean region while keeping orientations in terms of focus countries and support actions needed. The main goal of the Foundation remains to adapt to the reality and challenges facing civil society on the ground. As an example, Syria has been a priority country of the Foundation's interventions for several years and this decision was taken in anticipation of the worsening situation. In addition, the EMHRF has the capacity to allocate support to associations which are not legally registered and cannot find other sources of financial support.

While remaining flexible, the Foundation implements strict monitoring procedures. For instance, the Secretariat systematically gathers and crosschecks information as part of a due diligence process prior to approving a grant and it also assesses the results of the activities undertaken by the Foundation's beneficiaries. The EMHRF is further audited by an international auditing firm. However specific information on the beneficiaries is not made public to avoid further threatening their lives.

### 3.4 Coordination between Donors

Since its inception, the Foundation has attempted to coordinate its efforts and avoid duplication of interventions with other funders in order to be effective in answering needs of civil society actors. It regularly did so by meeting and discussing with them on Syria and more recently on Egypt and on Libya for example. Opening an office in Tunisia in 2011 has further increased this dynamic, which became more systematic. The Foundation plays a convening role with other funders and it reinforced synergies with other funders, INGOs, the EMHRN and local institutions.

The funding needs in terms of human rights are huge in the region, and the Foundation therefore actively seeks -on a political level- to rally international funders. Although a full coordinated status has not been reached yet, the Foundation continuously strives in compelling other international foundations to support the needs of civil society in the region. And although this goes beyond its mandate, there is an undeniable need to reflect more globally on the funding policies in the region.

## 4. Closing of the fourth Consultation of the Council of Representatives

Following the discussions, President Driss El Yazami brought the fourth consultation of the Council of Representatives to an end, thanking all the participants for their constructive and helpful questions and contributions.

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# ANNEX 1: AGENDA, FOURTH CONSULTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

## AGENDA Consultation of the Council of Representatives

**15.30-15.45 Opening of the Consultation by Driss El Yazami, President**

**15.45-16.15 Briefing on the Foundation's operations during the period 2012-2014**

- Presentation of the main actions undertaken and financial implications
- Discussion with the Council

**16.15-16.45 Briefing on the Foundation's orientations for the period 2015-2017**

**16.45-17.00 Briefing on the intended cooptation of new members or new auditors**

**17.00-17.15 AOB**

**17.15-17.30 Closure**