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PRESS RELEASE: LAUNCH OF NEW HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION

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

Today, recalling the UN adoption of the 'Human Rights Defenders Declaration' on 9 December 1999 (1) the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) (2) launches a new human rights foundation

The Foundation aims at supporting human rights defenders by means of small scale, flexible funds and is envisaged as a specific initiative for the South And East Mediterranean region (3).

The Foundation's trade mark will be support of human rights organisations or members of human rights organisations under pressure or attack; innovative projects; and support of NGOs that have not yet gained mainstream donor recognition, or fall outside mainstream donor categories,

The Danish Development Agency (DANIDA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs have generously provided funds for running costs and grants while the Foundation's initial capital has been provided by DANIDA, SIDA, the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the EMHRN, the Mediterranean Academy for Diplomatic Studies and Swedish Refugee Aid.

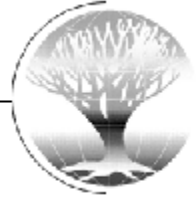
Appointed board members are (4):

- Khemais Chammari, Tunisia.
- Bahey El Din Hassan, Egypt.
- Kamel Jendoubi, France – Tunisia.
- Hanny Megally, Egypt – England.
- Christine M. Merkel, Germany.
- Eskil Trolle, Denmark.
- Driss El Yazami, Morocco.

The independent Foundation will be hosted by the EMHRN and EMHRN regular, individual and associate members will constitute the Foundation's Council of Representatives.

The Foundation will start being operational after the first board meeting scheduled for early February 2005 during which selection criteria for applicants will be finalised.

For more information, please contact
Marc Schade-Poulsen, Executive Director, EMHRN
Tel: +45.32.69.8910/ +45.51.20.55.15



NOTES

1. Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

2. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) is a network of more than 80 members representing human rights organisations, institutions, and individuals based in the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region¹. The EMHRN was set up in January 1997 in response to the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Its main objective is to

- Support and publicise in the EuroMed region the universal human rights principles as outlined in the international human rights instruments and the Barcelona Declaration;
- Strengthen, assist and co-ordinate the efforts of its members to monitor States' compliance with the principles of the Barcelona Declaration in the fields of human rights and humanitarian concerns.
- Support the development of democratic institutions, promote the Rule of Law, Human Rights, Gender Equality and Human Rights Education, and to strengthen Civil Society in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond.

One specific objective is to support the creation of independent non-governmental organisations to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions, or to support and assist existing non-governmental organisations; support and co-ordinate the actions of such organisations, and contribute, if necessary, to reinforcing their capacity.

3. Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. Projects located outside the region but with spill-over effects to it may eventually also be funded.

4. Two additional members will be appointed at the first board meeting.

¹ The Euro-Mediterranean region includes the countries of the European Union and 10 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The EMHRN members are based in the following countries: Algeria, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Palestine, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the UK.