



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

Second Consultation of the Council of Representatives

14 December 2008 - Barcelona

Minutes

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1. Opening of the second Consultation of the Council of Representatives

Driss El Yazami, President of the EMHRF, opened the 2nd Consultation of the Foundation's Council of Representatives on Sunday, 14 December 2008, by greeting and welcoming all the participants in Barcelona on behalf of the Board.

Further, the president submitted the minutes of the first Consultation of the EMHRF in 2006 for approval. There were no questions or comments to the minutes and these were approved.

Before beginning the discussion, the President of the Foundation submitted the nomination of a Chairperson and two note takers for approval by the representatives.

He stated that the consultation of the representatives takes place under the authority of the Chairperson with respect to the speaking order, the duration of speeches and matters concerning the proper conduct of the meeting.

The note takers oversee the general consultation process as well as, more specifically, the approval and voting procedures¹.

Mrs. Nasséra Dutour was nominated as Chairperson and Mrs. Barbara Harrell Bond and Mr. Radwan Ziadeh as note takers.

¹ See Appendix 3, Procedures for the Consultation of the Council of Representatives.

2. Review of the years 2006-2008

Mr. Driss El Yazami, President of the EMHRF, introduced the annual activity reports of the EMHRF for 2006 and 2007 as well as the activities undertaken in 2008 until the date of the Consultation.

2.1 Presentation of the activity reports

Mr. Driss El Yazami informed that the EMHRF had allocated funds to more than 100 human rights defenders in the South-Mediterranean region since 2005².

The major challenges faced by human rights defenders in the region have been of different nature including imprisonment, ill treatment and health problems, instrumentalisation of the Judiciary and repression of dissidents, limited human resources and operational difficulties and finally some groups have faced challenges because they are particularly vulnerable due to their nature.

Generally, the number of interventions has significantly increased in 2008 compared to the previous years. The Foundation has been working with three broad categories of interventions, the first of which is the urgent interventions in support of defenders facing difficulties or at risk³. The number of urgent interventions has diminished slightly from 2006 to 2007, but has increased notably during the year 2008. The second category is interventions to strengthen human and operational resources⁴ and the number of interventions in this category has been increasing since 2005, most significantly in 2008. The last category is interventions in support of innovative activities within the regional context⁵. The number of interventions in this category has also been increasing since 2005, most significantly in 2008.

As one of its main objectives, the Foundation has been following-up on the support granted and on the situation of the defenders on a regular basis. The follow-up has generally consisted in three different activities: Regular contacts with the recipients of funding by the Secretariat, visits in the field in order to listen to the defenders concerns and assess the most pressing needs as regard to the Foundation's mandate as well as strengthening of contacts and coordination with other organisations active on the national, regional and international levels in order to provide complementary and effective support to the defenders according to their needs.

Furthermore, Driss El Yazami presented the quantitative assessment of the Foundation's interventions during the period 2005-2008. He informed that the time frames with regards to the Foundations response to applications has been of an average time frame of 27 days for the urgent requests (from

² The total amount of support given by the EMHRF is more than 1 million Euros for the period 2005-2008 and totally 157 defenders and/or organizations have received support.

³ The number of urgent interventions was 6 in 2005, 9 in 2006, 7 in 2007, and 18 in 2008.

⁴ The number of interventions to strengthen capacities was 6 in 2005, 6 in 2006, 10 in 2007 and 23 in 2008.

⁵ The number of interventions in support of innovative activities was in 2005 3, in 2006 5, in 2007 5 and in 2008 13

the receipt of the request to the transfer of funds) and of an average time frame of 60 days for standard requests.

When the distribution of grants is considered thematically, it shows that the thematic which is supported the most is the support to human rights monitoring and documentation from human rights groups in the region. The second biggest thematic is the right and freedom of association and the establishment of new structures in support to this right.

The distribution of grants per country shows that Tunisia and Syria are the two countries which received the highest number of grants over the course of 2006-2008 in light of the current human rights context in these countries, followed by Algeria, Egypt and Israel/the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The countries which received the less support were Lebanon and Morocco mainly because human rights groups operating in these countries have, to some extent, higher capacities to approach and receive support from the main donors.

If the distribution of grants is considered from a gender perspective⁶, it shows that the Foundation gave priorities in supporting NGOs led by women human rights defenders and to projects dealing specifically with women's rights. The individual support to families of human rights defenders, often consisting of women and children, is also getting an important part of the EMHRF grants in 2008, whereas the part of support given directly to women human rights defenders remains modest.

2.2. Presentation of the financial reports

Eskil Trolle, Treasurer of the EMHRF, presented the audited annual reports for 2006-2007 as well as the balance sheet 2006-2007 and the provisional balance sheet for 2008 to the Council of Representatives.

Eskil Trolle noted that the income of the Foundation predominantly came through the generous contributions from the Danish International Cooperation Agency - DANIDA, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA and the Dutch Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The total income of the Foundation increased steadily each year⁷ and two third of the income has in average been spent on support to human rights defenders, whereas the remaining covered salaries, activity-related expenses and administrative expenses.

⁶ Grant disbursement from a gender perspective:

Individual support to women human rights defenders, percentage based on the number of grants: 2005: 10%, 2006: 5%, 2007: 0%, 2008: 2%. Average percentage 2005-2008: 4%.

Individual support to families of human rights defenders, percentage based on the number of grants 2005: 0%, 2006: 16%, 2007: 6%, and 2008: 10%. Average percentage 2005-2008: 8%. (It is notable however that a considerable number of individuals/organizations have received this kind of support, especially during the past year: 2006: 4, 2007: 1 and 2008: 68)

Support to NGOs led by women HRDs, percentage based on the number of grants 2005: 40%, 2006: 16%, 2007: 24%, and 2008: 16%. %.. Average percentage 2005-2008: 24%.

Support to projects dealing specifically with women's rights, percentage based on the number of grants 2005: 0%, 2006: 0%, 2007: 18%, and 2008: 16%. %.. Average percentage 2005-2008: 9%

⁷ Total income in 2006: EUR 371.016, 2007: EUR 515.805, 2008: EUR 587.189.

2.3. Discussion of the reports with the Council of Representatives

Several representatives⁸ expressed their gratitude towards the Foundation increasing role and work over the course of 2006-2008. In particular, the representatives highlighted the precious role of the Foundation in support of the defenders and their families in Syria. According to the Representatives, this has had a very positive impact both physically and psychologically to help the Syrian human rights defenders to overcome their present plight and continue their struggle. The same was expressed regarding Algerian human rights defenders among the assembly.

The questions raised during the Consultation of the Council of Representatives and the answers provided by the Board have been grouped by subject below.

2.3.1. Funding criteria⁹

The maximum duration of support is stated as 18 months. Will it be possible for the Foundation to help an organization/individual for a longer period, if there is still need of support?

In principle, the aim of the Foundation is to provide strategic medium and long term support to human rights defenders in the region for a maximum duration of 18 months. The aim of the Foundation is to provide seed support in order to allow small human rights groups to implement new ideas and projects in the region, for which the main donors might often not engage in due to the lack of track records. Therefore, the support provided by the Foundation should help these groups to provide other donors with documentation about the relevance of their ideas and projects. As a consequence, the role of the Foundation is to guide the human rights defenders towards other potential donors during and after completion of their projects rather than providing continued support to projects that could be funded by others. In this regard, the Board sees the role of the Foundation as complementary to other donors and tries to avoid duplication as much as possible.

Is the Foundation being complementary to other organisations and is the Board coordinating in order to avoid duplication of activities?

During the last years the Board noticed the emergence of some mechanisms which provide similar support to the defenders in the region. The Board is currently mapping these mechanisms and initiatives carried out by international or regional institutions and will continue to do so in order to favour the complementarities and avoid duplication of efforts. Through its visits and meetings in the region, the Foundation always ensures that discussions and exchanges of information occur with these institutions.

⁸ The representatives who had positive remarks regarding the Foundation's actions were in particular the followings: Danial Saoud (Committee for the defense of Democracy, Freedoms and Human rights in Syria -CDF), Madjid Benchikh (individual representative) and Radwan Ziadeh (Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies - DCHRS).

⁹ The representative who had questions and/or remarks about the funding criteria was Radwan Ziadeh (Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies).

The complementarity is an important issue with regards to the Foundation's fields of action. As an example, when an organisation is applying for support, the Secretariat asks whether it has also applied to other donors. If so, the Foundation might only consider this application as eligible when the applicant can show that the results of their efforts have been unsuccessful. If it has not applied to other donors but falls clearly within the mandate of the latter, the secretariat will often guide them towards these relevant donors.

Furthermore, when possible and needed, the Foundation often contacts other institutions in order to ask for complementary support to human rights defenders, such as solidarity, legal aid, protection, etc. For example, the Foundation acted in collaboration with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, Amnesty International, Frontline, etc. on several cases.

2.3.2. Funding procedures ¹⁰

How is the Foundation able to keep information confidential while also making visits to the countries of the beneficiaries?

The Foundation does everything possible not to endanger the human rights defenders or their activities. Since the beginning of its activities, the EMHRF maintained a strict policy of confidentiality regarding most of the information pertaining to the beneficiaries of its funding (name, amount, operating country, etc.).

This policy was adopted and has been pursued because of the serious risks potentially threatening the activities and persons for which funding is requested or has been granted, as well as other defenders working for the promotion and defense of human rights in countries of the South-Mediterranean region. The Foundation nonetheless maintains the transparency of its activities by providing its major donors with detailed information on its interventions and activities in support of human rights NGOs, groups and defenders in the region. As a consequence, the Board is very aware that the visits in the region require a lot of precaution and security measures to be taken.

How are the transfers of money made, when confidentiality is necessary, in order to avoid further risks on the recipients?

It is important to note that the situation varies from a country to another. However, the authorities in the region have in general been much more offensive with regards to the financing of NGO's than earlier. The Foundation acts discretely when necessary in order not to jeopardize the beneficiaries. During the 4 years that the Foundation has existed, no beneficiary has ever been prosecuted. The Board will not reveal how, how much and to whom the funds are given to the public at large but everything is transparent towards the auditors and donors.

¹⁰ The representatives who mainly had questions and/or remarks about the confidentiality of its activities were the following: Khadija Sadouk (Espace Associatif) and Mohamed Rahmali (Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme - LADH).

2.3.3 Activities ¹¹

The representatives noted that the strategy adopted by the Foundation fills out a gap and that it is therefore important to find means to continue this work and to follow-up on the situation of the beneficiaries. The flexibility of the Foundation's interventions replies to a high necessity in this region which is important to keep in the future.

It is important to encourage defenders in the region to seek support from the Foundation. Is the Board planning to increase the number of visits to the region?

The Board confirmed to the Representatives that it finds the visits extremely important and relevant as regard to its mandate. Visits to the region should be held on a regular basis, i.e. 2-3 times per year.

¹¹ The representative who had questions and/or remarks about the activities was the following: Madjid Benchikh (individual representative).

3. Actions to be undertaken and Budget for the period 2009-2011

3.1. Presentation of the Draft Framework Paper

Khémaïs Chammari, Member of the Board, presented the draft framework paper, which is part of the strategy implemented by the Foundation since its inception. The strategy is intended to be a work in progress and will take into account the changing needs of defenders in the region.

The Foundation has two distinct consultation processes, - an emergency process and a standard process. With regards to the emergency process, the Foundation acts on a short-term basis and in timely, concrete and discreet fashion to provide emergency support to human rights defenders who are in difficulty or at risk because of their human rights work in the region. The Foundation activities involved include an assessment of the urgent requests received by the EMHRF, the verification of the information provided and the preparation of the relevant documentation that will enable the Board to make a quick decision after submitting the request to a brief external assessment by consultants deemed reliable by the Board as well as EMHRF Representatives. The standard consultation process is applicable when it comes to the provision of medium - and long-term financial support to defenders and the decisions are made by the Board at its regular meetings. The Foundation provides strategic financial support to defenders who wish to establish and implement programmes and projects dealing with innovative subjects that have priority importance for the region. Among other things, the support granted in favour of such requests seeks to raise the public profile of the defenders' actions and strengthen their human resources and management capabilities so that they may establish new structures or conduct their activities efficiently in the region.

More precisely, the Foundation's activities include an evaluation of the requests received by the EMHRF, the assessment of the information provided and the preparation of the relevant documentation that will enable the Board to make a quick decision after obtaining an assessment of the request by outside experts.

Furthermore, the Foundation has defined different types of interventions. The first type of intervention proposed by the EMHRF consists in providing support to defenders who are facing difficulties or whose life is under threat as a result of violations of their fundamental rights.

The second type of intervention proposed by the EMHRF focuses on supporting defenders to enable them to consolidate and strengthen their activities. In the context of the standard support provided by the Foundation, special attention is paid to innovative thematic areas that have priority importance for the region. These areas are economic, social and cultural rights, empowerment of women, empowerment of young people, protection of minorities and refugees, fight against impunity and rehabilitation and reconciliation.

Moreover, the Foundation's Board has decided to establish three assistance funds for four countries considered as priorities for the EMHRF's interventions – namely, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt. The three funds cover support for human rights defenders and their families, including legal assistance, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration and support to organisations that are unrecognised or are prevented from pursuing their activities.

In principle, the potential recipients of this assistance must not be in a position to receive support from other organisations and institutions active at the national, regional or international level. The Foundation's project takes into account the opportunities that exist for urgent or institutional financial support by other organisations, and attempts to direct defenders in need to the organisation(s) that offer such support.

The Foundation finally carries out follow-up and monitoring of the situation of defenders, and strengthened coordination towards longer-term support. This is done by regular contacts with the recipients of funding in order to assess the impact of the support granted and, if required, examine the possibility of extending it over a longer period or involving other donors able to provide assistance. Also, the strengthening of contacts and coordination with national, regional and international entities involved in the protection and defence of human rights defenders is part of the efforts to ensure effective support for the protection and security of defenders and the pursuit of their activities. Finally a regular contact with other organisations at the national, regional and international level whose goals and mandates complement the Foundation's own objectives and mandate is also part of the follow-up and monitoring activities.

3.2. Presentation of the budget

Eskil Trolle, Treasurer of the EMHRF, presented the budget related to the draft framework paper. He informed that generally, the Foundation spends approximately 2/3 of its expenditures on support to human rights defenders in the region.

The Foundation strives to receive support from DANIDA, SIDA and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs also in the years to come after the completion of an external evaluation of its activities for the period 2005-2008. The Board also wishes to diversify the Foundation's income and will in this regard seek funds from other public and private institutions. A fundraising trip to the USA was organised in November 2008, where a delegation of the Board together with Anne-Sophie Schaeffer, the programme coordinator, met with many different organisations. These meetings were arranged both in view of exploring possibilities of cooperation with organisations whose activities are similar to those of the Foundation and to create contact with potential donors in view of fundraising. The delegation came home with positive feedback and the trip opened for several possibilities of funding.

3.3. Discussion and suggestions regarding the future activities and the budget¹²

3.3.1. Actions

It was suggested that the Foundation should work towards providing more training to human rights defenders in order to allow them to become more professional and not only to rely on voluntary actions. The Board stated that training of human rights defenders is already considered very important by the Foundation and that several training activities have been supported in the past years within the framework of its support to capacity building. Furthermore, the Board discussed with some human rights organizations the necessity to hold and focus trainings on specific issues in light of the experience of the Foundation.

3.3.2. Visits

The Representatives urged the Board to hold many visits to the region in order to encourage human rights defenders to send proposals to the Foundation. The Board confirmed that it is planning to increase the number of visits to the countries in the South and noted that the Foundation has already made 5 visits in the region, hereof 4 in 2008¹³.

3.3.3. Collaboration with other organisations

It was mentioned that the Foundation will probably receive more and more applications in the future and should therefore further coordinate with other organizations, for example organizations specialized within certain fields (health was mentioned as an example), in order to be able to reply to the increasing needs. The Board confirmed that they are aware of this crucial issue and explained that the Secretariat is already in contact with many other organisations, especially in connection with the urgent proposals, in order to collaborate and/or complement each other in the support actions undertaken.

3.3.4. Security Tools

The representatives asked how far the board was with finding a secure web solution for internal communication. The Board replied that the secretariat is and has been working on it, but

¹² The representatives who had questions and/or remarks were the following: Wadih al Asmar (SOLIDA), Radwan Ziadeh (Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies - DCHRS) and Kamel Daoud (Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme -LADDH)

¹³ 5 visits/missions in the region: Lebanon (October 2007), Syria (January 2008), Egypt (February 2008), Algeria (July 2008), Jordan (August 2008).

unfortunately there is no such thing as 100% secure web communication. The secretariat hopes to establish a secure forum for Board members to communicate as safely as possible, in particular for the handling of the urgent proposals, over the course of 2009.

3.3.5. Budget

Some representatives wanted to know how much of the budgeted income was already secured for the upcoming years. The Board replied that part of the funds will be provided by the European Commission for the period 2009-2011. The Foundation also expects to receive continued support from DANIDA, SIDA and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the time being, more than 60% of the funds needed have been secured for 2009. In addition, the Foundation is working on applying for funds from other donors following the visit in the USA.

4. Closure of the second Consultation of the Council of Representatives

The second Consultation of the Council of Representatives was officially closed by the Chairperson of the Consultation, Nasséra Dutour, and the President of the Foundation, Driss El Yazami, who thanked all participants for their valuable questions and contributions.

Driss El Yazami noted that the number of questions and comments from the representatives was less significant than during the first Consultation two years ago. This was probably due both to the fact that the Representatives are now much more aware of the Foundation's goals and work and the fact that the Foundation has now established its structure and clear way of functioning.

Since the General Assembly of the EMHRN will take place every third year - no longer every second year - the EMHRF will in accordance also hold its next Consultation in third years' time. Due to the rather small number of representatives participating in this Consultation, it was decided that the EMHRF should try to hold its Consultation earlier in the course of the EMHRN General Assembly, in order to allow as many of the representatives as possible to participate.

Finally Driss El Yazami addressed a special thanks to the staff that had organised and worked on this second Consultation of the Council of Representatives.

APPENDIX 1: AGENDA, SECOND CONSULTATION OF THE COUNCIL OF REPRESENTATIVES

Barcelona, Sunday 14th December 2008

- **Opening of the Consultation of the Council of Representatives**

 - Opening by the President
 - Approval of the minutes from the last Consultation

- **Election of the Chairperson and Note Takers**

 - Nomination of the Chairperson and two note takers by the Board
 - Approval by the Council of Representatives

- **Narrative and Financial reporting for the period 2006-2008**

 - Presentation of the activity reports
 - Presentation of the financial reports
 - Discussion

- **Draft Framework Paper and Budget for the period 2009-2011**

 - Presentation of the draft framework paper
 - Presentation of the budget
 - Discussion
 - Miscellaneous

- **Closure**

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BOARD / CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Driss El Yazami
Mr. Hanny Megally
Mr. Eskil Trolle
Mrs. Lynn Welchman
Mr. Kamel Jendoubi
Mr. Khémaïs Chammari
Mr. Bahey El Din Hassan

REGULAR REPRESENTATIVES / REPRÉSENTANTS ORDINAIRES

National:

ADALAH, the Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, Al-Haq,	Mrs. Sawsan Zaher
African and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA),	Mr. Wesam Ahmad
Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH),	Mrs. Barbara Harell-Bond
Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates (ATFD),	Mr. Amine Abdelhamid
Beirut Bar Association,	Mrs. Khadija Cherif
Committees for the Defense of Democracy Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria (CDF),	Mr. Walid Al Nakib
Collectif des familles disparu(e)s en Algérie,	Mr. Danial Saoud
Comité pour le Respect des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie (CRLDHT),	Mrs. Nasséra Dutour
Conseil National pour les Libertés en Tunisie (CNLT),	Mr. Kamel Jendoubi
Damascus Center for Human Rights Studies,	Mr. Abdeljelil Bédoui
Espace Associatif,	Mr. Radwan Ziadeh
Federacion de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos,	Mrs. Khadija Sadouk
Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity (EEDDA),	Mr. Emilio Gines Sanridrian
Human Rights Association,	Mrs. Mari Lavrentiadou
Italian Refugee Council (CIR),	Mr. Mustafa Seyhanlioglu
Libyan League for Human Rights,	Mrs. Maria De Donato
Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LADDH),	Mr. Sliman Bouchuiguir
Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (LADDH),	Mr. Mohammed Rahmali
Mouvement franco-libanais SOLIDA,	Mr. Kamel Daoud
Organisation marocaine des Droits Humains (OMDH),	Mr. Wadih Al-Asmar
Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)	Mr. Mohamed NeshNash
Palestinian Human Rights Organisation in Lebanon (PHRO),	Mr. Raji Sourani
Palestinian Human Rights Organisation in Lebanon (PHRO),	Mrs. Roal Badran
Rights and Freedom Association,	Mr. Ghassan Abdellah
TAPRI Mediterranean Studies Project,	Mrs. Hayat Hussein Yasamsal
The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel,	Mrs. Anita Kynsilehto
	Mr. Ishai Menuchin

Regional:

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies,

Mr. Moataz El Fegiery

INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIVES/ REPRÉSENTANTS INDIVIDUELS

Mr. Jon Rud
Mrs. Anna Bozzo-Curti
Mr. Madjid Benchikh

ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES/ REPRÉSENTANTS ASSOCIÉS

Iraqi Human Rights Society,

Mr. Ali Diwan

OBSERVERS/ OBSERVATEURS

Association Européenne pour la défense des Droits de l'Homme (AEDH), Mr. Pierre Barge
Association Démocratique des femmes du Maroc (ADFM), Mrs. Nadia Haddouche
Comité pour le Respect des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie (CRLDHT),
Mr. Tarek Ben Hiba
Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights,
Mrs. Randa Siniora
Association Marocaine des Droits Humains (AMDH),
Mr. Larbi Maaninou
Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism (KISA),
Mr. Doros Polykarpou
Mouvement franco-libanais SOLIDA,
Mrs. Berangère Pineau

STAFF/ PERSONNEL

Programme Coordinator EMHRF,
Administrative Secretary EMHRF,
Executive Director EMHRN,

Ms. Anne-Sophie Schaeffer
Mrs. Katrine Frederiksen
Mr. Marc Schade-Poulsen

APPENDIX 3: PROCEDURES

In order to facilitate the consultation, please find below the procedures for the meeting made as an application of the Statutes of the Foundation.

- **Convening of the Council of Representatives**

The meeting of Representatives shall be convened by not less than 30 (thirty) days' notice prior to the meeting.

- **Agenda for the Consultation**

The Board of the EMHRF shall prepare the agenda of each consultation of Representatives and communicate it to the Representatives at least 30 (thirty) days before the session.

In addition to the agenda of the meeting of Representatives, the following documents shall be sent to each of the members of the Council of Representatives:

- 1) The annual Board's report on the Foundation's operations and activities from the previous year
- 2) The audited annual report from the previous year
- 3) Proposals for an action, activity plan and budget for the next year
- 4) Other documents as deemed necessary

The Consultation consists of four parts:

- The first part is devoted to the presentation of the activity and financial reports of the EMHRF from the previous year by the Board
- The second part is devoted to the presentation of the activity plan as well as the budget for the next year by the Board
- The third part is devoted to the discussion of proposals received from the Representatives to the Secretariat of the EMHRF
- The fourth part is devoted if necessary to the presentation of new Board members and auditors.

- **The Conduct of the Consultation**

The conduct of the consultation shall take place under the authority of a Chairperson, assisted by two note takers, all coming from the Council of Representatives.

After the election of the Chairperson, suggested by the Board, the latter also nominates two note takers for approval by the Representatives.

The Chairperson shall:

- Declare the opening and closure of the consultation of the Council of Representatives
- Direct the discussions, handle the list of speakers, keep a record of all suggestions that are put forward and handle the order of propositions

The meeting is chaired by the Chairperson, assisted in his/her duty by the President and the members of the Board of the EMHRF.

- **Proposals**

There shall be two categories of proposals:

- Proposals concerning the EMHRF's activities shall be submitted in writing in one or more of the working languages to the Board not less than 22 (twenty two) days prior to the meeting of Representatives.
- Proposals on issues related to serious risks or pressure on human rights defenders or organizations in the region taken place during the two-month period before the meeting of Representatives shall be submitted in writing in one or more of the working languages to the Board not less than 22 (twenty two) days prior to the meeting of Representatives. If the risks or pressures faced by human rights defenders or organizations started during the three weeks prior to the meeting, the proposal can be presented during the meeting.

The Secretariat shall forward the proposals to all Representatives as soon as practicable, and preferably no later than 21 (twenty one) days prior to the meeting.

The Board shall be responsible for ensuring as far as possible that proposals, which are relatively similar, are merged and that those, which are clearly outside the competence of the Foundation, are deleted from the agenda.

If there are several proposals, the Chairperson shall decide the order in which they will be discussed during the third part of the meeting.

- **Minutes of the Consultation**

Minutes shall be recorded of any consultation of the Council of Representatives. They should state the content of the matter and which proposals were made.

The minutes should be confirmed by the Board and circulated to the Representatives not later than 9 (nine) weeks after the meeting.

The minutes shall be signed by the Board when accepted by the Council of Representatives as correct at the beginning of its next session.

- **Languages**

The working languages of the Foundation, English, French and Arabic, shall be used at all meetings of the Representatives.

Simultaneous interpretation shall be arranged in the working languages at all meetings of the Representatives

At the request of any representative offering to pay the extra cost, the Foundation if practicable shall also provide simultaneous interpretation into and from the representative's language.

- **Guests and observers**

At the discretion of the Secretariat and the Host Representative, and in consultation with the Board, Representatives may bring guests to the meeting.